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OUR OLD HOME.

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BY

NATHANIEL HAWTHORNE,

AUTHOR OF "TRANSFORMATION," "THE SCARLET LETTER,"
ETC. ETC.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

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TO

FRANKLIN PIERCE,

AS A SLIGHT MEMORIAL OF A COLLEGE FRIENDSHIP,

PROLONGED THROUGH MANHOOD,

AND RETAINING ALL ITS VITALITY IN OUR AUTUMNAL YEARS,

These Volumes are Inscribed

BY NATHANIEL HAWTHORNE.

TO A FRIEND.

I HAVE not asked your consent, my dear General, to the foregoing inscription, because it would have been no inconsiderable disappointment to me had you withheld it; for I have long desired to connect your name with some book of mine, in commemoration of an early friendship that has grown old between two individuals of widely dissimilar pursuits and fortunes. I only wish that the offering were a worthier one than these Sketches, which certainly are not of a kind likely to prove interesting to a statesman in retirement, inasmuch as they meddle with no matters of policy or government, and have very little to say about the deeper traits of national

character. In their humble way, they belong entirely to æsthetic literature, and can achieve no higher success than to represent to the American reader a few of the external aspects of English scenery and life, especially those that are touched with the antique charm to which our countrymen are more susceptible than are the people among whom it is of native growth.

I once hoped, indeed, that so slight a work would not be all that I might write. These and other Sketches, with which, in a somewhat rougher form than I have given them here, my journal was copiously filled, were intended for the side-scenes and backgrounds and exterior adornment of a work of fiction of which the plan had imperfectly developed itself in my mind, and into which I ambitiously proposed to convey more of various modes of truth than I could have grasped by a direct effort. Of course, I should not mention this abortive project, only that it has been utterly thrown aside and will never now be accomplished. The Present, the Immediate, the Actual, has proved too potent for me. It takes away not

only my scanty faculty, but even my desire for imaginative composition, and leaves me sadly content to scatter a thousand peaceful fantasies upon the hurricane that is sweeping us all along with it, possibly, into a limbo where our nation and its polity may be as literally the fragments of a shattered dream as my unwritten Romance. But I have far better hopes for our dear country; and for my individual share of the catastrophe, I afflict myself little, or not at all, and shall easily find room for the abortive work on a certain ideal shelf, where are reposited many other shadowy volumes of mine, more in number, and very much superior in quality, to those which I have succeeded in rendering actual.

To return to these poor Sketches: some of my friends have told me that they evince an asperity of sentiment towards the English people which I ought not to feel, and which it is highly inexpedient to express. The charge surprises me, because, if it be true, I have written from a shallower mood than I supposed. I seldom came into personal relations with an Englishman without

beginning to like him, and feeling my favourable impression wax stronger with the progress of the acquaintance. I never stood in an English crowd without being conscious of hereditary sympathies. Nevertheless, it is undeniable that an American is continually thrown upon his national antagonism by some acrid quality in the moral atmosphere of England. These people think so loftily of themselves, and so contemptuously of everybody else, that it requires more generosity than I possess to keep always in perfectly good humour with them. Jotting down the little acrimonies of the moment in my journal, and transferring them thence (when they happened to be tolerably well expressed) to these pages, it is very possible that I may have said things which a profound observer of national character would hesitate to sanction, though never any, I verily believe, that had not more or less of truth. If they be true, there is no reason in the world why they should not be said. Not an Englishman of them all ever spared America for courtesy's sake or kindness; nor, in my opinion, would it contribute in the least to our mutual

advantage and comfort if we were to besmear one another all over with butter and honey. At any rate, we must not judge of an Englishman's susceptibilities by our own, which, likewise, I trust, are of a far less sensitive texture than formerly.

And now farewell, my dear friend; and excuse (if you think it needs any excuse) the freedom with which I thus publicly assert a personal friendship between a private individual and a statesman who has filled what was then the most august position in the world. But I dedicate my book to the Friend, and shall defer a colloquy with the Statesman till some calmer and sunnier hour. Only this let me say, that, with the record of your life in my memory, and with a sense of your character in my deeper consciousness as among the few things that time has left as it found them, I need no assurance that you continue faithful for ever to that grand idea of an irrevocable Union, which, as you once told me, was the earliest that your brave father taught you. For other men there may be a choice of paths—for you, but one; and it rests among my cer-

tainties that no man's loyalty is more steadfast, no man's hopes or apprehensions on behalf of our national existence more deeply heartfelt, or more closely intertwined with his possibilities of personal happiness, than those of FRANKLIN PIERCE.

OUR OLD HOME.

CONSULAR EXPERIENCES.

The Consulate of the United States, in my day, was located in Washington Buildings, (a shabby and smoke-stained edifice of four stories high, thus illustriously named in honour of our national establishment,) at the lower corner of Brunswick Street, contiguous to the Goree Arcade, and in the neighbourhood of some of the oldest docks. This was by no means a polite or elegant portion of England's great commercial city, nor were the apartments of the American official so splendid as to indicate the assumption of much consular pomp on his part. A narrow and ill-lighted staircase gave access to an equally narrow and

ill-lighted passage-way on the first floor, at the extremity of which, surmounting a door-frame, appeared an exceedingly stiff pictorial representation of the Goose and Gridiron, according to the English idea of those ever-to-be-honoured symbols. The staircase and passage-way were often thronged, of a morning, with a set of beggarly and piratical-looking scoundrels, (I do no wrong to our own countrymen in styling them so, for not one in twenty was a genuine American,) purporting to belong to our mercantile marine, and chiefly composed of Liverpool Blackballers and the scum of every maritime nation on earth; such being the seamen by whose assistance we then disputed the navigation of the world with England. These specimens of a most unfortunate class of people were shipwrecked crews in quest of bed, board, and clothing, invalids asking permits for the hospital, bruised and bloody wretches complaining of ill-treatment by their officers, drunkards, desperadoes, vagabonds, and cheats, perplexingly intermingled with an uncertain proportion of reasonably honest men. All of them (save here and there a poor devil of a kidnapped landsman in his shore-going rags) wore red flannel

shirts, in which they had sweltered or shivered throughout the voyage, and all required consular assistance in one form or another.

Any respectable visitor, if he could make up his mind to elbow a passage among these sea-monsters, was admitted into an outer office, where he found more of the same species, explaining their respective wants or grievances to the Vice-Consul and clerks, while their shipmates awaited their turn outside the door. Passing through this exterior court, the stranger was ushered into an inner privacy, where sat the Consul himself, ready to give personal attention to such peculiarly difficult and more important cases as might demand the exercise of (what we will courteously suppose to be) his own higher judicial or administrative sagacity.

It was an apartment of very moderate size, painted in imitation of oak, and duskily lighted by two windows looking across a by-street at the rough brick-side of an immense cotton warehouse, a plainer and uglier structure than ever was built in America. On the walls of the room hung a large map of the United States, (as they were twenty years ago, but seem little likely to be, twenty

years hence), and a similar one of Great Britain, with its territory so provokingly compact, that we may expect it to sink sooner than sunder. Farther adornments were some rude engravings of our naval victories in the war of 1812, together with the Tennessee State House, and a Hudson River steamer, and a coloured, life-size lithograph of General Taylor, with an honest hideousness of aspect, occupying the place of honour above the mantel-piece. On the top of a bookcase stood a fierce and terrible bust of General Jackson, pilloried in a military collar which rose above his ears, and frowning forth immitigably at any Englishman who might happen to cross the threshold. I am afraid, however, that the truculence of the old general's expression was utterly thrown away on this stolid and obdurate race of men; for, when they occasionally inquired whom this work of art represented, I was mortified to find that the younger ones had never heard of the battle of New Orleans, and that their elders had either forgotten it altogether, or contrived to misremember, and twist it wrong end foremost into something like an English victory. They have caught from the old Romans (whom they resemble

in so many other characteristics) this excellent method of keeping the national glory intact, by sweeping all defeats and humiliations clean out of their memory. Nevertheless, my patriotism forbade me to take down either the bust or the pictures, both because it seemed no more than right that an American Consulate (being a little patch of our nationality imbedded into the soil and institutions of England) should fairly represent the American taste in the fine arts, and because these decorations reminded me so delightfully of an old-fashioned American barber's shop.

One truly English object was a barometer hanging on the wall, generally indicating one or another degree of disagreeable weather, and so seldom pointing to Fair, that I began to consider that portion of its circle as made superfluously. The deep chimney, with its grate of bituminous coal, was English too, as was also the chill temperature that sometimes called for a fire at midsummer, and the foggy or smoky atmosphere which often, between November and March, compelled me to set the gas aflame at noonday. I am not aware of omitting anything important in the above descriptive inventory, unless it be some

book-shelves filled with octavo volumes of the American Statutes, and a good many pigeon-holes stuffed with dusty communications from former Secretaries of State, and other official documents of similar value, constituting part of the archives of the Consulate, which I might have done my successor a favour by flinging into the coal-grate. Yes! there was one other article demanding prominent notice: the consular copy of the New Testament, bound in black morocco, and greasy, I fear, with a daily succession of perjured kisses; at least, I can hardly hope that all the ten thousand oaths, administered by me between two breaths, to all sorts of people and on all manner of worldly business, were reckoned by the swearer as if taken at his soul's peril.

Such, in short, was the dusky and stifled chamber in which I spent wearily a considerable portion of more than four good years of my existence. At first, to be quite frank with the reader, I looked upon it as not altogether fit to be tenanted by the commercial representative of so great and prosperous a country as the United States then were; and I should speedily have transferred my head-quarters to airier and loftier

apartments, except for the prudent consideration that my Government would have left me thus to support its dignity at my own personal expense. Besides, a long line of distinguished predecessors, of whom the latest is now a gallant general under the Union banner, had found the locality good enough for them; it might certainly be tolerated, therefore, by an individual so little ambitious of external magnificence as myself. So I settled quietly down, striking some of my roots into such soil as I could find, adapting myself to circumstances; and with so much success, that, though from first to last, I hated the very sight of the little room, I should yet have felt a singular kind of reluctance in changing it for a better.

Hither, in the course of my incumbency, came a great variety of visitors, principally Americans, but including almost every other nationality on earth, especially the distressed and downfallen ones —like those of Poland and Hungary. Italian bandits (for so they looked), proscribed conspirators from Old Spain, Spanish Americans, Cubans who professed to have stood by Lopez and narrowly escaped his fate, scarred French soldiers of the Second Republic,—in a word, all sufferers, or

pretended ones, in the cause of Liberty, all people homeless in the widest sense, those who never had a country or had lost it, those whom their native land had impatiently flung off for planning a better system of things than they were born to,—a multitude of these, and, doubtless, an equal number of jail-birds, outwardly of the same feather, sought the American Consulate, in hopes of at least a bit of bread, and, perhaps, to beg a passage to the blessed shores of Freedom. In most cases there was nothing, and in any case distressingly little, to be done for them; neither was I of a proselyting disposition, nor desired to make my Consulate a nucleus for the vagrant discontents of other lands. And yet it was a proud thought, a forcible appeal to the sympathies of an American, that these unfortunates claimed the privileges of citizenship in our Republic on the strength of the very same noble misdemeanors that had rendered them outlaws to their native despotisms. So I gave them what small help I could. Methinks the true patriots and martyr-spirits of the whole world should have been conscious of a pang near the heart, when a deadly blow was aimed at the vitality of a country

which they have felt to be their own in the last resort.

As for my countrymen, I grew better acquainted with many of our national characteristics during those four years than in all my preceding life. Whether brought more strikingly out by the contrast with English manners, or that my Yankee friends assumed an extra peculiarity from a sense of defiant patriotism, so it was that their tones, sentiments, and behaviour, even their figures and cast of countenance, all seemed chiselled in sharper angles than ever I had imagined them to be at home. It impressed me with an odd idea of having somehow lost the property of my own person, when I occasionally heard one of them speaking of me as "my Consul!" They often came to the Consulate in parties of half a dozen or more, on no business whatever, but merely to subject their public servant to a rigid examination, and see how he was getting on with his duties. These interviews were rather formidable, being characterized by a certain stiffness which I felt to be sufficiently irksome at the moment, though it looks laughable enough in the retrospect. It is my firm belief that these fellow-citizens, possessing a native tendency to

organization, generally halted outside of the door to elect a speaker, chairman, or moderator, and thus approached me with all the formalities of a deputation from the American people. After salutations on both sides,—abrupt, awful, and severe on their part, and deprecatory on mine,—and the national ceremony of shaking hands being duly gone through with, the interview proceeded by a series of calm and well-considered questions or remarks from the spokesman (no other of the guests vouchsafing to utter a word), and diplomatic responses from the Consul, who sometimes found the investigation a little more searching than he liked. I flatter myself, however, that, by much practice, I attained considerable skill in this kind of intercourse; the art of which lies in passing off common-places for new and valuable truths, and talking trash and emptiness in such a way that a pretty acute auditor might mistake it for something solid. If there be any better method of dealing with such junctures,—when talk is to be created out of nothing, and within the scope of several minds at once, so that you cannot apply yourself to your interlocutor's individuality,—I have not learned it.

Sitting, as it were in the gateway between the Old World and the New, where the steamers and packets landed the greater part of our wandering countrymen, and received them again when their wanderings were done, I saw that no people on earth have such vagabond habits as ourselves. The Continental races never travel at all, if they can help it; nor does an Englishman ever think of stirring abroad, unless he has the money to spare, or proposes to himself some definite advantage from the journey; but it seemed to me that nothing was more common than for a young American deliberately to spend all his resources in an æsthetic peregrination about Europe, returning with pockets nearly empty to begin the world in earnest. It happened, indeed, much oftener than was at all agreeable to myself, that their funds held out just long enough to bring them to the door of my Consulate, where they entered as if with an undeniable right to its shelter and protection, and required at my hands to be sent home again. In my first simplicity, — finding them gentlemanly in manners, passably educated, and only tempted a little beyond their means by a laudable desire of improving and refining them-

selves, or, perhaps, for the sake of getting better artistic instruction in music, painting, or sculpture than our country could supply,—I sometimes took charge of them on my private responsibility, since our Government gives itself no trouble about its stray children, except the seafaring class. But after a few such experiments, discovering that none of these estimable and ingenuous young men, however trustworthy they might appear, ever dreamed of reimbursing the Consul, I deemed it expedient to take another course with them. Applying myself to some friendly shipmaster, I engaged homeward passages on their behalf, with the understanding that they were to make themselves serviceable on shipboard; and I remember several very pathetic appeals from painters and musicians, touching the damage which their artistic fingers were likely to incur from handling the ropes. But my observation of so many heavier troubles left me very little tenderness for their finger-ends. In time, I grew to be reasonably hard-hearted; though it never was quite possible to leave a countryman with no shelter save an English poor-house, when, as he invariably averred, he had only to set foot on his native soil

to be possessed of ample funds. It was my ultimate conclusion, however, that American ingenuity may be pretty safely left to itself; and that, one way or another, a Yankee vagabond is certain to turn up at his own threshold, if he has any, without help of a consul, and perhaps be taught a lesson of foresight that may profit him hereafter.

Among these stray Americans, I met with no other case so remarkable as that of an old man, who was in the habit of visiting me once in a few months, and soberly affirmed that he had been wandering about England more than a quarter of a century, (precisely twenty-seven years, I think,) and all the while doing his utmost to get home again. Herman Melville, in his excellent novel or biography of "Israel Potter," has an idea somewhat similar to this. The individual now in question was a mild and patient, but very ragged and pitiable old fellow, shabby beyond description, lean and hungry-looking, but with a large and somewhat red nose. He made no complaint of his ill-fortune, but only repeated in a quiet voice, with a pathos of which he was himself evidently unconscious,—"I want to get home to

Ninety-second Street, Philadelphia." He described himself as a printer by trade, and said that he had come over when he was a younger man, in the hope of bettering himself, and for the sake of seeing the Old Country, but had never since been rich enough to pay his homeward passage. His manner and accent did not quite convince me that he was an American, and I told him so; but he steadfastly affirmed,—"Sir, I was born and have lived in Ninety-second Street, Philadelphia," and then went on to describe some public edifices and other local objects with which he used to be familiar; adding, with a simplicity that touched me very closely, "Sir, I had rather be there than here!" Though I still manifested a lingering doubt, he took no offence, replying with the same mild depression as at first, and insisting again and again on Ninety-second Street. Up to the time when I saw him, he still got a little occasional job-work at his trade, but subsisted mainly on such charity as he met with in his wanderings, shifting from place to place continually, and asking assistance to convey him to his native land. Possibly he was an impostor, one of the multitudinous shapes of English vagabondism; and told

his falsehood with such powerful simplicity, because, by many repetitions, he had convinced himself of its truth. But if, as I believe, the tale was fact, how very strange and sad was this old man's fate! Homeless on a foreign shore, looking always towards his country, coming again and again to the point whence so many were setting sail for it,—so many who would soon tread in Ninety-second Street,—losing, in this long series of years, some of the distinctive characteristics of an American, and at last dying and surrendering his clay to be a portion of the soil whence he could not escape in his lifetime.

He appeared to see that he had moved me, but did not attempt to press his advantage with any new argument, or any varied form of entreaty. He had but scanty and scattered thoughts in his gray head, and in the intervals of those, like the refrain of an old ballad, came in the monotonous burden of his appeal,—"If I could only find myself in Ninety-second Street, Philadelphia!" But even his desire of getting home had ceased to be an ardent one, (if, indeed, it had not always partaken of the dreamy sluggishness of his character,) although it remained his only locomotive impulse,

and perhaps the sole principle of life that kept his blood from actual torpor.

The poor old fellow's story seemed to me almost as worthy of being chanted in immortal song as that of Odysseus or Evangeline. I took his case into deep consideration, but dared not incur the moral responsibility of sending him across the sea, at his age, after so many years of exile, when the very tradition of him had passed away, to find his friends dead, or forgetful, or irretrievably vanished, and the whole country become more truly a foreign land to him than England was now,—and even Ninety-second Street, in the weedlike decay and growth of our localities, made over anew and grown unrecognizable by his old eyes. That street, so patiently longed for, had transferred itself to the New Jerusalem, and he must seek it there, contenting his slow heart, meanwhile, with the smoke-begrimed thoroughfares of English towns, or the green country lanes and by-paths with which his wanderings had made him familiar; for doubtless he had a beaten track and was the "long-remembered beggar" now, with food and a roughly hospitable greeting ready for him at many a farm-house door, and his choice of lodging

under a score of haystacks. In America, nothing awaited him but that worst form of disappointment which comes under the guise of a long-cherished and late-accomplished purpose, and then a year or two of dry and barren sojourn in an almshouse, and death among strangers at last, where he had imagined a circle of familiar faces. So I contented myself with giving him alms, which he thankfully accepted, and went away with bent shoulders and an aspect of gentle forlornness; returning upon his orbit, however, after a few months, to tell the same sad and quiet story of his abode in England for more than twenty-seven years, in all which time he had been endeavouring, and still endeavoured as patiently as ever, to find his way home to Ninety-second Street, Philadelphia.

I recollect another case, of a more ridiculous order, but still with a foolish kind of pathos entangled in it, which impresses me now more forcibly than it did at the moment. One day, a queer, stupid, good-natured, fat-faced individual came into my private room, dressed in a sky-blue, cut-away coat and mixed trousers, both garments worn and shabby, and rather too small for his

overgrown bulk. After a little preliminary talk, he turned out to be a country shopkeeper, (from Connecticut, I think,) who had left a flourishing business, and come over to England purposely and solely to have an interview with the Queen. Some years before he had named his two children, one for Her Majesty and the other for Prince Albert, and had transmitted photographs of the little people, as well as of his wife and himself, to the illustrious godmother. The Queen had gratefully acknowledged the favour, in a letter under the hand of her private secretary. Now, the shopkeeper, like a great many other Americans, had long cherished a fantastic notion that he was one of the rightful heirs of a rich English estate; and on the strength of Her Majesty's letter and the hopes of royal patronage which it inspired, he had shut up his little country-store and come over to claim his inheritance. On the voyage, a German fellow-passenger had relieved him of his money on pretence of getting it favourably exchanged, and had disappeared immediately on the ship's arrival; so that the poor fellow was compelled to pawn all his clothes except the remarkably shabby ones in which I beheld him, and in which (as he himself

hinted, with a melancholy, yet good-natured smile) he did not look altogether fit to see the Queen. I agreed with him that the bobtailed coat and mixed trousers constituted a very odd-looking court-dress, and suggested that it was doubtless his present purpose to get back to Connecticut as fast as possible. But no! The resolve to see the Queen was as strong in him as ever; and it was marvellous the pertinacity with which he clung to it amid raggedness and starvation, and the earnestness of his supplication that I would supply him with funds for a suitable appearance at Windsor Castle.

I never had so satisfactory a perception of a complete booby before in my life; and it caused me to feel kindly towards him, and yet impatient and exasperated on behalf of common sense, which could not possibly tolerate that such an unimaginable donkey should exist. I laid his absurdity before him in the very plainest terms, but without either exciting his anger or shaking his resolution. "Oh, my dear man," quoth he, with good-natured, placid, simple, and tearful stubbornness, "if you could but enter into my feelings and see the matter from beginning to end as I see it!" To

confess the truth, I have since felt that I was hard-hearted to the poor simpleton, and that there was more weight in his remonstrance than I chose to be sensible of, at the time; for, like many men who have been in the habit of making playthings or tools of their imagination and sensibility, I was too rigidly tenacious of what was reasonable in the affairs of real life. And even absurdity has its rights, when, as in this case, it has absorbed a human being's entire nature and purposes. I ought to have transmitted him to Mr. Buchanan, in London, who, being a good-natured old gentleman, and anxious, just then, to gratify the universal Yankee nation, might, for the joke's sake, have got him admittance to the Queen, who had fairly laid herself open to his visit, and has received hundreds of our countrymen on infinitely slighter grounds. But I was inexorable, being turned to flint by the insufferable proximity of a fool, and refused to interfere with his business in any way except to procure him a passage home. I can see his face of mild, ridiculous despair, at this moment, and appreciate, better than I could then, how awfully cruel he must have felt my obduracy to be. For years and years, the idea of

an interview with Queen Victoria had haunted his poor foolish mind; and now, when he really stood on English ground, and the palace-door was hanging ajar for him, he was expected to turn back, a penniless and bamboozled simpleton, merely because an iron-hearted Consul refused to lend him thirty shillings (so low had his demand ultimately sunk) to buy a second-class ticket on the rail for London!

He visited the Consulate several times afterwards, subsisting on a pittance that I allowed him in the hope of gradually starving him back to Connecticut, assailing me with the old petition at every opportunity, looking shabbier at every visit, but still thoroughly good-tempered, mildly stubborn, and smiling through his tears, not without a perception of the ludicrousness of his own position. Finally, he disappeared altogether, and whither he had wandered, and whether he ever saw the Queen, or wasted quite away in the endeavour, I never knew; but I remember unfolding the *Times*, about that period, with a daily dread of reading an account of a ragged Yankee's attempt to steal into Buckingham Palace, and how he smiled tearfully at his captors, and besought

them to introduce him to Her Majesty. I submit to Mr. Secretary Seward that he ought to make diplomatic remonstrances to the British Ministry, and require them to take such order that the Queen shall not any longer bewilder the wits of our poor compatriots by responding to their epistles and thanking them for their photographs.

One circumstance in the foregoing incident—I mean the unhappy storekeeper's notion of establishing his claim to an English estate—was common to a great many other applications, personal or by letter, with which I was favoured by my countrymen. The cause of this peculiar insanity lies deep in the Anglo-American heart. After all these bloody wars and vindictive animosities, we have still an unspeakable yearning towards England. When our forefathers left the old home, they pulled up many of their roots, but trailed along with them others, which were never snapt asunder by the tug of such a lengthening distance, nor have been torn out of the original soil by the violence of subsequent struggles, nor severed by the edge of the sword. Even so late as these days, they remain entangled with our heart-strings, and might often have influenced our

national cause like the tiller-ropes of a ship, if the rough gripe of England had been capable of managing so sensitive a kind of machinery. It has required nothing less than the boorishness, the stolidity, the self-sufficiency, the contemptuous jealousy, the half-sagacity, invariably blind of one eye and often distorted of the other, that characterize this strange people, to compel us to be a great nation in our own right, instead of continuing virtually, if not in name, a province of their small island. What pains did they take to shake us off, and have ever since taken to keep us wide apart from them! It might seem their folly, but was really their fate, or, rather, the Providence of God, who has, doubtless, a work for us to do, in which the massive materiality of the English character would have been too ponderous a dead-weight upon our progress. And, besides, if England had been wise enough to twine our new vigour round about her ancient strength, her power would have been too firmly established ever to yield, in its due season, to the otherwise immutable law of imperial vicissitude. The earth might then have beheld the intolerable spectacle of a sovereignty and institutions, imperfect, but indestructible.

Nationally, there has ceased to be any peril of so inauspicious and yet outwardly attractive an amalgamation. But as an individual, the American is often conscious of the deep-rooted sympathies that belong more fitly to times gone by, and feels a blind, pathetic tendency to wander back again, which makes itself evident in such wild dreams as I have alluded to above, about English inheritances. A mere coincidence of names, (the Yankee one, perhaps, having been assumed by legislative permission,) a supposititious pedigree, a silver mug on which an anciently engraved coat-of-arms has been half scrubbed out, a seal with an uncertain crest, an old yellow letter or document in faded ink, the more scantily legible the better,—rubbish of this kind, found in a neglected drawer, has been potent enough to turn the brain of many an honest Republican, especially if assisted by an advertisement for lost heirs, cut out of a British newspaper. There is no estimating or believing, till we come into a position to know it, what foolery lurks latent in the breasts of very sensible people. Remembering such sober extravagances, I should not be at all surprised to find that I am myself guilty of some unsuspected absurdity, that may

appear to me the most substantial trait in my character.

I might fill many pages with instances of this diseased American appetite for English soil. A respectable-looking woman, well advanced in life, of sour aspect, exceedingly homely, but decidedly New Englandish in figure and manners, came to my office with a great bundle of documents, at the very first glimpse of which I apprehended something terrible. Nor was I mistaken. The bundle contained evidences of her indubitable claim to the site on which Castle Street, the Town Hall, the Exchange, and all the principal business part of Liverpool, have long been situated; and, with considerable peremptoriness, the good lady signified her expectation that I should take charge of her suit, and prosecute it to judgment: not, however, on the equitable condition of receiving half the value of the property recovered, (which, in case of complete success, would have made both of us ten or twenty fold millionnaires), but without recompense or reimbursement of legal expenses, solely as an incident of my official duty. Another time came two ladies, bearing a letter of emphatic introduction from his Excellency the

Governor of their native State, who testified in most satisfactory terms to their social respectability. They were claimants of a great estate in Cheshire, and announced themselves as blood-relatives of Queen Victoria,—a point, however, which they deemed it expedient to keep in the background until their territorial rights should be established; apprehending that the Lord High Chancellor might otherwise be less likely to come to a fair decision in respect to them, from a probable disinclination to admit new members into the royal kin. Upon my honour, I imagine that they had an eye to the possibility of the eventual succession of one or both of them to the crown of Great Britain through superiority of title over the Brunswick line; although, being maiden ladies, like their predecessor Elizabeth, they could hardly have hoped to establish a lasting dynasty upon the throne. It proves, I trust, a certain disinterestedness on my part, that, encountering them thus in the dawn of their fortunes, I forbore to put in a plea for a future dukedom.

Another visitor of the same class was a gentleman of refined manners, handsome figure, and remarkably intellectual aspect. Like many men

of an adventurous cast, he had so quiet a deportment, and such an apparent disinclination to general sociability, that you would have fancied him moving always along some peaceful and secluded walk of life. Yet, literally from his first hour, he had been tossed upon the surges of a most varied and tumultuous existence, having been born at sea, of American parentage, but on board of a Spanish vessel, and spending many of the subsequent years in voyages, travels, and outlandish incidents and vicissitudes, which, methought, had hardly been paralleled since the days of Gulliver or De Foe. When his dignified reserve was overcome, he had the faculty of narrating these adventures with wonderful eloquence, working up his descriptive sketches with such intuitive perception of the picturesque points, that the whole was thrown forward with a positively illusive effect, like matters of your own visual experience. In fact, they were so admirably done that I could never more than half believe them, because the genuine affairs of life are not apt to transact themselves so artistically. Many of his scenes were laid in the East, and among those seldom visited archipelagoes of the

Indian Ocean, so that there was an Oriental fragrance breathing through his talk, and an odour of the Spice Islands still lingering in his garments. He had much to say of the delightful qualities of the Malay pirates, who, indeed, carry on a predatory warfare against the ships of all civilized nations, and cut every Christian throat among their prisoners; but (except for deeds of that character, which are the rule and habit of their life, and matter of religion and conscience with them), they are a gentle-natured people, of primitive innocence and integrity.

But his best story was about a race of men (if men they were), who seemed so fully to realize Swift's wicked fable of the Yahoos, that my friend was much exercised with psychological speculations whether or no they had any souls. They dwelt in the wilds of Ceylon, like other savage beasts, hairy, and spotted with tufts of fur, filthy, shameless, weaponless (though warlike in their individual bent), toolless, houseless, languageless, except for a few guttural sounds hideously dissonant, whereby they held some rudest kind of communication among themselves. They lacked both memory and foresight, and were wholly

destitute of government, social institutions, or law or rulership of any description, except the immediate tyranny of the strongest; radically untamable, moreover, save that the people of the country managed to subject a few of the less ferocious and stupid ones to out-door servitude among their other cattle. They were beastly in almost all their attributes, and that to such a degree that the observer, losing sight of any link betwixt them and manhood, could generally witness their brutalities without greater horror than at those of some disagreeable quadruped in a menagerie. And yet, at times, comparing what were the lowest general traits in his own race, with what was highest in these abominable monsters, he found a ghastly similitude that half compelled him to recognize them as human brethren.

After these Gulliverian researches, my agreeable acquaintance had fallen under the ban of the Dutch government, and had suffered (this, at least, being matter of fact) nearly two years' imprisonment with confiscation of a large amount of property; for which Mr. Belmont, our minister at the Hague, had just made a peremptory de-

mand of reimbursement and damages. Meanwhile, since arriving in England on his way to the United States, he had been providentially led to inquire into the circumstances of his birth on shipboard, and had discovered that not himself alone, but another baby, had come into the world during the same voyage of the prolific vessel, and that there were almost irrefragable reasons for believing that these two children had been assigned to the wrong mothers. Many reminiscences of his early days confirmed him in the idea that his nominal parents were aware of the exchange. The family to which he felt authorized to attribute his lineage was that of a nobleman, in the picture-gallery of whose country-seat (whence, if I mistake not, our adventurous friend had just returned) he had discovered a portrait bearing a striking resemblance to himself. As soon as he should have reported the outrageous action of the Dutch government to President Pierce and the Secretary of State, and recovered the confiscated property, he purposed to return to England and establish his claim to the nobleman's title and estate.

I had accepted his Oriental fantasies (which,

indeed, to do him justice, have been recorded by scientific societies among the genuine phenomena of natural history), not as matters of indubitable credence, but as allowable specimens of an imaginative traveller's vivid colouring and rich embroidery on the coarse texture and dull neutral tints of truth. The English romance was among the latest communications that he intrusted to my private ear; and as soon as I heard the first chapter,—so wonderfully akin to what I might have wrought out of my own head, not unpractised in such figments,—I began to repent having made myself responsible for the future nobleman's passage homeward in the next Collins steamer. Nevertheless, should his English rent-roll fall a little behindhand, his Dutch claim for a hundred thousand dollars was certainly in the hands of our government, and might at least be valuable to the extent of thirty pounds, which I had engaged to pay on his behalf. But I have reason to fear that his Dutch riches turned out to be Dutch gilt or fairy gold, and his English country-seat a mere castle in the air,—which I exceedingly regret, for he was a delightful companion and a very gentlemanly man.

A Consul, in his position of universal responsibility, the general adviser and helper, sometimes finds himself compelled to assume the guardianship of personages who, in their own sphere, are supposed capable of superintending the highest interests of whole communities. An elderly Irishman, a naturalized citizen, once put the desire and expectation of all our penniless vagabonds into a very suitable phrase, by pathetically entreating me to be a "father to him;" and, simple as I sit scribbling here, I have acted a father's part, not only by scores of such unthrifty old children as himself, but by a progeny of far loftier pretensions. It may be well for persons who are conscious of any radical weakness in their character, any besetting sin, any unlawful propensity, any unhallowed impulse, which (while surrounded with the manifold restraints that protect a man from that treacherous and lifelong enemy, his lower self, in the circle of society where he is at home) they may have succeeded in keeping under the lock and key of strictest propriety,— it may be well for them, before seeking the perilous freedom of a distant land, released from the watchful eyes of neighbourhoods and coteries,

lightened of that wearisome burden, an immaculate name, and blissfully obscure after years of local prominence,—it may be well for such individuals to know that when they set foot on a foreign shore, the long-imprisoned Evil, scenting a wild license in the unaccustomed atmosphere, is apt to grow riotous in its iron cage. It rattles the rusty barriers with gigantic turbulence, and if there be an infirm joint anywhere in the framework, it breaks madly forth, compressing the mischief of a lifetime into a little space.

A parcel of letters had been accumulating at the Consulate for two or three weeks, directed to a certain Doctor of Divinity, who had left America by a sailing-packet and was still upon the sea. In due time, the vessel arrived, and the reverend doctor paid me a visit. He was a fine-looking middle-aged gentleman, a perfect model of clerical propriety, scholar-like, yet with the air of a man of the world rather than a student, though overspread with the graceful sanctity of a popular metropolitan divine, a part of whose duty it might be to exemplify the natural accordance between Christianity and good-breeding. He seemed a little excited, as an American is apt to be on

first arriving in England, but conversed with intelligence as well as animation, making himself so agreeable that his visit stood out in considerable relief from the monotony of my daily commonplace. As I learned from authentic sources, he was somewhat distinguished in his own region for fervor and eloquence in the pulpit, but was now compelled to relinquish it temporarily for the purpose of renovating his impaired health by an extensive tour in Europe. Promising to dine with me, he took up his bundle of letters and went away.

The doctor, however, failed to make his appearance at dinner-time, or to apologise the next day for his absence; and in the course of a day or two more, I forgot all about him, concluding that he must have set forth on his continental travels, the plan of which he had sketched out at our interview. But, by-and-by, I received a call from the master of the vessel in which he had arrived. He was in some alarm about his passenger, whose luggage remained on shipboard, but of whom nothing had been heard or seen since the moment of his departure from the Consulate. We conferred together, the captain and I, about the

expediency of setting the police on the traces (if any were to be found) of our vanished friend; but it struck me that the good captain was singularly reticent, and that there was something a little mysterious in a few points that he hinted at, rather than expressed; so that, scrutinizing the affair carefully, I surmised that the intimacy of life on shipboard might have taught him more about the reverend gentleman than, for some reason or other, he deemed it prudent to reveal. At home, in our native country, I would have looked to the doctor's personal safety and left his reputation to take care of itself, knowing that the good fame of a thousand saintly clergymen would amply dazzle out any lamentable spot on a single brother's character. But in scornful and invidious England, on the idea that the credit of the sacred office was measurably intrusted to my discretion, I could not endure, for the sake of American Doctors of Divinity generally, that this particular doctor should cut an ignoble figure in the police reports of the English newspapers, except at the last necessity. The clerical body, I flatter myself, will acknowledge that I acted on their own principle. Besides, it was now too late; the mischief

and violence, if any had been impending, were not of a kind which it requires the better part of a week to perpetrate; and to sum up the entire matter, I felt certain from a good deal of somewhat similar experience, that, if the missing Doctor still breathed this vital air, he would turn up at the Consulate as soon as his money should be stolen or spent.

Precisely a week after this reverend person's disappearance, there came to my office a tall, middle-aged gentleman in a blue military surtout, braided at the seams, but out at elbows, and as shabby as if the wearer had been bivouacking in it throughout a Crimean campaign. It was buttoned up to the very chin, except where three or four of the buttons were lost; nor was there any glimpse of a white shirt-collar illuminating the rusty black cravat. A grisly moustache was just beginning to roughen the stranger's upper lip. He looked disreputable to the last degree, but still had a ruined air of good society glimmering about him, like a few specks of polish on a sword-blade that has lain corroding in a mud-puddle. I took him to be some American marine officer, of dissipated habits, or perhaps a cashiered British

major, stumbling into the wrong quarters through the unrectified bewilderment of last night's debauch. He greeted me, however, with polite familiarity, as though we had been previously acquainted; whereupon I drew coldly back (as sensible people naturally do, whether from strangers or former friends, when too evidently at odds with fortune), and requested to know who my visitor might be, and what was his business at the Consulate. "Am I then so changed?" he exclaimed with a vast depth of tragic intonation; and after a little blind and bewildered talk, behold! the truth flashed upon me. It was the Doctor of Divinity! If I had meditated a scene or a *coup de theâtre*, I could not have contrived a more effectual one than by this simple and genuine difficulty of recognition. The poor Divine must have felt that he had lost his personal identity through the misadventures of one little week. And, to say the truth, he did look as if, like Job, on account of his especial sanctity, he had been delivered over to the direst temptations of Satan, and proving weaker than the man of Uz, the Arch Enemy had been empowered to drag him through Tophet, transforming him, in the process,

from the most decorous of metropolitan clergymen into the rowdiest and dirtiest of disbanded officers. I never fathomed the mystery of his military costume, but conjectured that a lurking sense of fitness had induced him to exchange his clerical garments for this habit of a sinner; nor can I tell precisely into what pitfall, not more of vice than terrible calamity, he had precipitated himself,—being more than satisfied to know that the outcasts of society can sink no lower than this poor, desecrated wretch had sunk.

The opportunity, I presume, does not often happen to a layman, of administering moral and religious reproof to a Doctor of Divinity; but finding the occasion thrust upon me, and the hereditary Puritan waxing strong in my breast, I deemed it a matter of conscience not to let it pass entirely unimproved. The truth is, I was unspeakably shocked and disgusted. Not, however, that I was then to learn that clergymen are made of the same flesh and blood as other people, and perhaps lack one small safeguard which the rest of us possess, because they are aware of their own peccability, and therefore cannot look up to the clerical class for the proof of the possibility of a

pure life on earth, with such reverential confidence as we are prone to do. But I remembered the innocent faith of my boyhood; and the good old silver-headed clergyman, who seemed to me as much a saint then on earth as he is now in heaven, and partly for whose sake, through all these darkening years, I retain a devout, though not intact nor unwavering respect for the entire fraternity. What a hideous wrong, therefore, had the backslider inflicted on his brethren, and still more on me, who much needed whatever fragments of broken reverence (broken, not as concerned religion, but its earthly institutions and professors), it might yet be possible to patch into a sacred image! Should all pulpits and communion-tables have thenceforth a stain upon them, and the guilty one go unrebuked for it? So I spoke to the unhappy man as I never thought myself warranted in speaking to any other mortal, hitting him hard, doing my utmost to find out his vulnerable part, and prick him into the depths of it. And not without more effect than I had dreamed of, or desired!

No doubt, the novelty of the Doctor's reversed position, thus standing up to receive such a fulmi-

nation as the clergy have heretofore arrogated the exclusive right of inflicting, might give additional weight and sting to the words which I found utterance for. But there was another reason (which, had I in the least suspected it, would have closed my lips at once), for his feeling morbidly sensitive to the cruel rebuke that I administered. The unfortunate man had come to me, labouring under one of the consequences of his riotous outbreak, in the shape of delirium tremens; he bore a hell within the compass of his own breast, all the torments of which blazed up with tenfold inveteracy when I thus took upon himself the devil's office of stirring up the red-hot embers. His emotions, as well as the external movement and expression of them by voice, countenance, and gesture, were terribly exaggerated by the tremendous vibration of nerves resulting from the disease. It was the deepest tragedy I ever witnessed. I know sufficiently, from that one experience, how a condemned soul would manifest its agonies; and for the future, if I have anything to do with sinners, I mean to operate upon them through sympathy, and not rebuke. What had I to do with rebuking him? The disease, long

latent in his heart, had shown itself in a frightful eruption on the surface of his life. That was all! Is it a thing to scold the sufferer for?

To conclude this wretched story, the poor Doctor of Divinity, having been robbed of all his money in this little airing beyond the limits of propriety, was easily persuaded to give up the intended tour and return to his bereaved flock, who, very probably, were thereafter conscious of an increased unction in his soul-stirring eloquence, without suspecting the awful depths into which their pastor had dived in quest of it. His voice is now silent. I leave it to members of his own profession to decide whether it was better for him thus to sin outright, and so to be let into the miserable secret what manner of man he was, or to have gone through life outwardly unspotted, making the first discovery of his latent evil at the judgment-seat. It has occurred to me that his dire calamity, as both he and I regarded it, might have been the only method by which precisely such a man as himself, and so situated, could be redeemed. He has learned, ere now, how that matter stood.

For a man, with a natural tendency to meddle

with other people's business, there could not possibly be a more congenial sphere than the Liverpool Consulate. For myself, I had never been in the habit of feeling that I could sufficiently comprehend any particular conjunction of circumstances with human character, to justify me in thrusting in my awkward agency among the intricate and unintelligible machinery of Providence. I have always hated to give advice, especially when there is a prospect of its being taken. It is only one-eyed people who love to advise, or have any spontaneous promptitude of action. When a man opens both his eyes, he generally sees about as many reasons for acting in one way as in any other, and quite as many for acting in neither; and is therefore likely to leave his friends to regulate their own conduct, and also to remain quiet as regards his especial affairs till necessity shall prick him onward. Nevertheless, the world and individuals flourish upon a constant succession of blunders. The secret of English practical success lies in their characteristic faculty of shutting one eye, whereby they get so distinct and decided a view of what immediately concerns them that they go stumbling towards it over a

hundred insurmountable obstacles, and achieve a magnificent triumph without ever being aware of half its difficulties. If General M'Clellan could but have shut his left eye, the right one would long ago have guided us into Richmond. Meanwhile, I have strayed far away from the Consulate, where, as I was about to say, I was compelled, in spite of my disinclination, to impart both advice and assistance in multifarious affairs that did not personally concern me, and presume that I effected about as little mischief as other men in similar contingencies. The duties of the office carried me to prisons, police-courts, hospitals, lunatic asylums, coroners' inquests, death-beds, funerals; and brought me in contact with insane people, criminals, ruined speculators, wild adventurers, diplomatists, brother consuls, and all manner of simpletons and unfortunates, in greater number and variety than I had ever dreamed of as pertaining to America; in addition to whom there was an equivalent multitude of English rogues, dexterously counterfeiting the genuine Yankee article. It required great discrimination not to be taken in by these last-mentioned scoundrels; for they knew how to

imitate our national traits, had been at great pains to instruct themselves as regarded American localities, and were not readily to be caught by a cross-examination as to the topographical features, public institutions, or prominent inhabitants, of the places where they pretended to belong. The best shibboleth I ever hit upon lay in the pronunciation of the word "been," which the English invariably make to rhyme with "green;" and we Northerners, at least (in accordance, I think, with the custom of Shakspeare's time), universally pronounce "bin."

All the matters that I have been treating of, however, were merely incidental, and quite distinct from the real business of the office. A great part of the wear-and-tear of mind and temper resulted from the bad relations between the seamen and officers of American ships. Scarcely a morning passed, but that some sailor came to show the marks of his ill-usage on shipboard. Often, it was a whole crew of them, each with his broken head or livid bruise, and all testifying with one voice to a constant series of savage outrages during the voyage; or, it might be, they laid an accusation of actual murder, perpetrated by the first or

second officers with many blows of steel knuckles, a rope's end, or a marline-spike, or by the captain, in the twinkling of an eye, with a shot of his pistol. Taking the seamen's view of the case, you would suppose that the gibbet was hungry for the murderers. Listening to the captain's defence, you would seem to discover that he and his officers were the humanest of mortals, but were driven to a wholesome severity by the mutinous conduct of the crew, who, moreover, had themselves slain their comrade in the drunken riot and confusion of the first day or two after they were shipped. Looked at judicially, there appeared to be no right side to the matter, nor any right side possible in so thoroughly vicious a system as that of the American mercantile marine. The Consul could do little, except to take depositions, hold forth the greasy Testament to be profaned anew with purjured kisses, and, in a few instances of murder or manslaughter, carry the case before an English magistrate, who generally decided that the evidence was too contradictory to authorize the transmission of the accused for trial in America. The newspapers all over England contained paragraphs, inveighing against the cruelties of Ameri-

can shipmasters. The British parliament took up the matter, (for nobody is so humane as John Bull, when his benevolent propensities are to be gratified by finding fault with his neighbour,) and caused Lord John Russell to remonstrate with our Government on the outrages for which it was responsible before the world, and which it failed to prevent or punish. The American Secretary of State, old General Cass, responded, with perfectly astounding ignorance of the subject, to the effect that the statements of outrages had probably been exaggerated, that the present laws of the United States were quite adequate to deal with them, and that the interference of the British Minister was uncalled for.

The truth is, that the state of affairs was really very horrible, and could be met by no laws at that time (or I presume now) in existence. I once thought of writing a pamphlet on the subject, but quitted the Consulate before finding time to effect my purpose; and all that phase of my life immediately assumed so dreamlike a consistency that I despaired of making it seem solid or tangible to the public. And now it looks distant and dim, like troubles of a century ago. The origin of the

evil lay in the character of the seamen, scarcely any of whom were American, but the offscourings and refuse of all the seaports of the world, such stuff as piracy is made of, together with a considerable intermixture of returning emigrants, and a sprinkling of absolutely kidnapped American citizens. Even with such material, the ships were very inadequately manned. The shipmaster found himself upon the deep, with a vast responsibility of property and human life upon his hands, and no means of salvation except by compelling his inefficient and demoralized crew to heavier exertions than could reasonably be required of the same number of able seamen. By law he had been intrusted with no discretion of judicious punishment: he therefore habitually left the whole matter of discipline to his irresponsible mates, men often of scarcely a superior quality to the crew. Hence ensued a great mass of petty outrages, unjustifiable assaults, shameful indignities and nameless cruelty, demoralizing alike to the perpetrators and the sufferers; these enormities fell into the ocean between the two countries, and could be punished in neither. Many miserable stories come back upon my memory as I write;

wrongs that were immense, but for which nobody could be held responsible, and which, indeed, the closer you looked into them, the more they lost the aspect of wilful misdoing and assumed that of an inevitable calamity. It was the fault of a system, the misfortune of an individual. Be that as it may, however, there will be no possibility of dealing effectually with these troubles as long as we deem it inconsistent with our national dignity or interests to allow the English courts, under such restrictions as may seem fit, a jurisdiction over offences perpetrated on board our vessels in mid-ocean.

In such a life as this, the American shipmaster develops himself into a man of iron energies, dauntless courage, and inexhaustible resource; at the expense, it must be acknowledged, of some of the higher and gentler traits which might do him excellent service in maintaining his authority. The class has deteriorated of late years on account of the narrower field of selection, owing chiefly to the diminution of that excellent body of respectably educated New England seamen, from the flower of whom the officers used to be recruited. Yet I found them, in many cases, very agreeable and in-

telligent companions, with less nonsense about them than landsmen usually have, eschewers of fine-spun theories, delighting in square and tangible ideas, but occasionally infested with prejudices that stuck to their brains like barnacles to a ship's bottom. I never could flatter myself that I was a general favourite with them. One or two, perhaps, even now, would scarcely meet me on amicable terms. Endowed universally with a great pertinacity of will, they especially disliked the interference of a Consul with their management on shipboard; notwithstanding which I thrust in my very limited authority at every available opening, and did the utmost that lay in my power, though with lamentably small effect, towards enforcing a better kind of discipline. They thought, no doubt, (and on plausible grounds enough, but scarcely appreciating just that one little grain of hard New England sense, oddly thrown in among the flimsier composition of the Consul's character,) that he, a landsman, a bookman, and, as people said of him, a fanciful recluse, could not possibly understand anything of the difficulties or the necessities of a shipmaster's position. But their cold regards were rather acceptable than otherwise, for it is

exceedingly awkward to assume a judicial austerity in the morning towards a man with whom you have been hobnobbing over-night.

With the technical details of the business of that great Consulate, (for great it then was, though now, I fear, wofully fallen off, and perhaps never to be revived in anything like its former extent,) I did not much interfere. They could safely be left to the treatment of two as faithful, upright, and competent subordinates, both Englishmen, as ever a man was fortunate enough to meet with, in a line of life altogether new and strange to him. I had come over with instructions to supply both their places with Americans, but, possessing a happy faculty of knowing my own interest and the public's, I quietly kept hold of them, being little inclined to open the consular doors to a spy of the State Department or an intriguer for my own office. The venerable Vice-Consul, Mr. Pearce, had witnessed the successive arrivals of a score of newly appointed Consuls, shadowy and short-lived dignitaries, and carried his reminiscences back to the epoch of Consul Maury, who was appointed by Washington, and has acquired almost the grandeur of a mythical

personage in the annals of the Consulate. The principal clerk, Mr. Wilding, who has since succeeded to the vice-consulship, was a man of English integrity—not that the English are more honest than ourselves, but only there is a certain sturdy reliableness common among them, which we do not quite so invariably manifest in just these subordinate positions—of English integrity, combined with American acuteness of intellect, quick-wittedness, and diversity of talent. It seemed an immense pity that he should wear out his life at a desk, without a step in advance from year's end to year's end, when, had it been his luck to be born on our side of the water, his bright faculties and clear probity would have insured him eminent success in whatever path he might adopt. Meanwhile, it would have been a sore mischance to me, had any better fortune on his part deprived me of Mr. Wilding's services.

A fair amount of common-sense, some acquaintance with the United States' statutes, an insight into character, a tact of management, a general knowledge of the world, and a reasonable but not too inveterately decided preference for his own will and judgment over those of interested people,

—these natural attributes and moderate acquirements will enable a consul to perform many of his duties respectably, but not to dispense with a great variety of other qualifications, only attainable by long experience. Yet, I think, few consuls are so well accomplished. An appointment of whatever grade, in the diplomatic or consular service of America, is too often what the English call a "job;" that is to say, it is made on private and personal grounds, without a paramount eye to the public good or the gentleman's especial fitness for the position. It is not too much to say, (of course allowing for a brilliant exception here and there,) that an American never is thoroughly qualified for a foreign post, nor has time to make himself so, before the revolution of the political wheel discards him from his office. Our country wrongs itself by permitting such a system of unsuitable appointments, and, still more, of removals for no cause, just when the incumbent might be beginning to ripen into usefulness. Mere ignorance of official detail is of comparatively small moment; though it is considered indispensable, I presume, that a man in any private capacity shall be thoroughly acquainted with the machinery and

operation of his business, and shall not necessarily lose his position on having attained such knowledge. But there are so many more important things to be thought of, in the qualifications of a foreign resident, that his technical dexterity or clumsiness is hardly worth mentioning.

One great part of a consul's duty, for example, should consist in building up for himself a recognized position in the society where he resides, so that his local influence might be felt in behalf of his own country, and so far as they are compatible (as they generally are to the utmost extent) for the interests of both nations. The foreign city should know that it has a permanent inhabitant and a hearty well-wisher in him. There are many conjunctures (and one of them is now upon us) where a long-established, honoured, and trusted American citizen, holding a public position under our government in such a town as Liverpool, might go far towards swaying and directing the sympathies of the inhabitants. He might throw his own weight into the balance against mischief-makers; he might have set his foot on the first little spark of malignant purpose, which the next wind may blow into a national war. But we wilfully give up all

advantages of this kind. The position is totally beyond the attainment of an American; there to-day, bristling all over with the porcupine quills of our Republic, and gone to-morrow, just as he is becoming sensible of the broader and more generous patriotism which might almost amalgamate with that of England, without losing an atom of its native force and flavour. In the changes that appear to await us, and some of which, at least, can hardly fail to be for good, let us hope for a reform in this matter.

For myself, as the gentle reader would spare me the trouble of saying, I was not at all the kind of man to grow into such an ideal consul as I have here suggested. I never in my life desired to be burdened with public influence. I disliked my office from the first, and never came into any good accordance with it. Its dignity, so far as it had any, was an incumbrance; the attentions it drew upon me (such as invitations to mayor's banquets and public celebrations of all kinds, where, to my horror, I found myself expected to stand up and speak) were—as I may say, without incivility or ingratitude, because there is nothing personal in that sort of hospitality—a bore. The official busi-

ness was irksome, and often painful. There was nothing pleasant about the whole affair except the emoluments; and even those, never too bountifully reaped, were diminished by more than half in the second or third year of my incumbency. All this being true, I was quite prepared, in advance of the inauguration of Mr. Buchanan, to send in my resignation. When my successor arrived, I drew the long, delightful breath which first made me thoroughly sensible what an unnatural life I had been leading, and compelled me to admire myself for having battled with it so sturdily. The newcomer proved to be a very genial and agreeable gentleman, and F. F. V., and, as he pleasantly acknowledged, a Southern fire-eater,—an announcement to which I responded, with similar good-humour and self-complacency, by parading my descent from an ancient line of Massachusetts Puritans. Since our brief acquaintanceship, my fire-eating friend has had ample opportunities to banquet on his favourite diet, hot and hot, in the Confederate service. For myself, as soon as I was out of office, the retrospect began to look unreal. I could scarcely believe that it was I—that figure whom they call a consul—but a sort of Double

Ganger, who had been permitted to assume my aspect, under which he went through his shadowy duties with a tolerable show of efficiency, while my real self had lain, as regarded my proper mode of being and acting, in a state of suspended animation.

The same sense of illusion still pursues me. There is some mistake in this matter. I have been writing about another man's consular experiences, with which, through some mysterious medium of transmitted ideas, I find myself intimately acquainted, but in which I cannot possibly have had a personal interest. Is it not a dream altogether? The figure of that poor Doctor of Divinity looks wonderfully lifelike; so do those of the Oriental adventurer with the visionary coronet above his brow, and the moon-struck visitor of the Queen, and the poor old wanderer, seeking his native country through English highways and by-ways for almost thirty years; and so would a hundred others that I might summon up with similar distinctness. But were they more than shadows? Surely, I think not. Nor are these present pages a bit of intrusive autobiography. Let not the reader wrong me by supposing it. I

never should have written with half such unreserve, had it been a portion of this life congenial with my nature, which I am living now, instead of a series of incidents and characters entirely apart from my own concerns, and on which the qualities personally proper to me could have had no bearing. Almost the only real incidents, as I see them now, were the visits of a young English friend, a scholar and a literary amateur, between whom and myself there sprung up an affectionate, and, I trust, not transitory regard. He used to come and sit or stand by my fireside, talking vivaciously and eloquently with me about literature and life, his own national characteristics and mine, with such kindly endurance of the many rough republicanisms wherewith I assailed him, and such frank and amiable assertion of all sorts of English prejudices and mistakes, that I understood his countrymen infinitely the better for him, and was almost prepared to love the intensest Englishman of them all, for his sake. It would gratify my cherished remembrance of this dear friend, if I could manage, without offending him, or letting the public know it, to introduce his name upon my page. Bright was the illumination of my

dusky little apartment, as often as he made his appearance there!

The English sketches which I have been offering to the public, comprise a few of the more external and therefore more readily manageable things that I took note of, in many escapes from the imprisonment of my consular servitude. Liverpool, though not very delightful as a place of residence, is a most convenient and admirable point to get away from. London is only five hours off by the fast train. Chester, the most curious town in England, with its encompassing wall, its ancient rows, and its venerable cathedral, is close at hand. North Wales, with all its hills and ponds, its noble sea-scenery, its multitude of gray castles and strange old villages, may be glanced at in a summer day or two. The lakes and mountains of Cumberland and Westmoreland may be reached before dinner-time. The haunted and legendary Isle of Man, a little kingdom by itself, lies within the scope of an afternoon's voyage. Edinburgh or Glasgow are attainable over night, and Loch Lomond betimes in the morning. Visiting these famous localities, and a great many others, I hope that I do not compromise

my American patriotism by acknowledging that I was often conscious of a fervent hereditary attachment to the native soil of our forefathers, and felt it to be our own Old Home.

LEAMINGTON SPA.

In the course of several visits and stays of considerable length we acquired a homelike feeling towards Leamington, and came back thither again and again, chiefly because we had been there before. Wandering and wayside people, such as we had long since become, retain a few of the instincts that belong to a more settled way of life, and often prefer familiar and common-place objects (for the very reason that they are so) to the dreary strangeness of scenes that might be thought much better worth the seeing. There is a small nest of a place in Leamington—at No. 10, Lansdowne Circus — upon which, to this day, my reminiscences are apt to settle as one of the coziest nooks in England or in the world; not that it had any special charm of its own, but only that we stayed long enough to know it well,

and even to grow a little tired of it. In my opinion, the very tediousness of home and friends makes a part of what we love them for; if it be not mixed in sufficiently with the other elements of life, there may be mad enjoyment, but no happiness.

The modest abode to which I have alluded forms one of a circular range of pretty, moderate-sized, two-story houses, all built on nearly the same plan, and each provided with its little grass-plot, its flowers, its tufts of box trimmed into globes and other fantastic shapes, and its verdant hedges shutting the house in from the common drive and dividing it from its equally cozy neighbours. Coming out of the door, and taking a turn round the circle of sister-dwellings, it is difficult to find your way back by any distinguishing individuality of your own habitation. In the centre of the Circus is a space fenced in with iron railing, a small play-place and sylvan retreat for the children of the precinct, permeated by brief paths through the fresh English grass, and shadowed by various shrubbery; amid which, if you like, you may fancy yourself in a deep seclusion, though probably the mark of eye-shot from the windows of

all the surrounding houses. But, in truth, with regard to the rest of the town and the world at large, an abode here is a genuine seclusion; for the ordinary stream of life does not run through this little quiet pool, and few or none of the inhabitants seem to be troubled with any business or outside activities. I used to set them down as half-pay officers, dowagers of narrow income, elderly maiden ladies, and other people of respectability, but small account, such as hang on the world's skirts rather than actually belong to it. The quiet of the place was seldom disturbed, except by the grocer and butcher, who came to receive orders, or by the cabs, hackney-coaches, and Bath-chairs, in which the ladies took an infrequent airing, or the livery steed which the retired captain sometimes bestrode for a morning ride, or by the red-coated postman who went his rounds twice a day to deliver letters, and again in the evening, ringing a hand-bell, to take letters for the mail. In merely mentioning these slight interruptions of its sluggish stillness, I seem to myself to disturb too much the atmosphere of quiet that brooded over the spot; whereas its impression upon me was, that the world had never found the

way hither, or had forgotten it, and that the fortunate inhabitants were the only ones who possessed the spellword of admittance. Nothing could have suited me better, at the time; for I had been holding a position of public servitude, which imposed upon me (among a great many lighter duties) the ponderous necessity of being universally civil and sociable.

Nevertheless, if a man were seeking the bustle of society, he might find it more readily in Leamington than in most other English towns. It is a permanent watering-place, a sort of institution to which I do not know any close parallel in American life: for such places as Saratoga bloom only for the summer season, and offer a thousand dissimilitudes even then; while Leamington seems to be always in flower, and serves as a home to the homeless all the year round. Its original nucleus, the plausible excuse for the town's coming into prosperous existence, lies in the fiction of a chalybeate well, which, indeed, is so far a reality that out of its magical depths have gushed streets, groves, gardens, mansions, shops, and churches, and spread themselves along the banks of the little river Leam. This miracle

accomplished, the beneficent fountain has retired beneath a pump-room, and appears to have given up all pretensions to the remedial virtues formerly attributed to it. I know not whether its waters are ever tasted nowadays; but not the less does Leamington—in pleasant Warwickshire, at the very midmost point of England, in a good hunting neighbourhood, and surrounded by country-seats and castles — continue to be a resort of transient visitors, and the more permanent abode of a class of genteel, unoccupied, well-to-do, but not very wealthy people, such as are hardly known among ourselves. Persons who have no country-houses, and whose fortunes are inadequate to a London expenditure, find here, I suppose, a sort of town and country life in one.

In its present aspect the town is of no great age. In contrast with the antiquity of many places in its neighbourhood, it has a bright new face, and seems almost to smile even amid the sombreness of an English autumn. Nevertheless, it is hundreds upon hundreds of years old, if we reckon up that sleepy lapse of time during which it existed as a small village of thatched houses, clustered round a priory; and it would still have

been precisely such a rural village, but for a certain Doctor Jephson, who lived within the memory of man, and who found out the magic well, and foresaw what fairy wealth might be made to flow from it. A public garden has been laid out along the margin of the Leam, and called the Jephson Garden, in honour of him who created the prosperity of his native spot. A little way within the garden-gate there is a circular temple of Grecian architecture, beneath the dome of which stands a marble statue of the good Doctor, very well executed, and representing him with a face of fussy activity and benevolence: just the kind of man, if luck favoured him, to build up the fortunes of those about him, or, quite as probably, to blight his whole neighbourhood by some disastrous speculation.

The Jephson Garden is very beautiful, like most other English pleasure-grounds; for, aided by their moist climate and not too fervid sun, the landscape gardeners excel in converting flat or tame surfaces into attractive scenery, chiefly through the skilful arrangement of trees and shrubbery. An Englishman aims at this effect even in the little patches under the windows of a suburban villa, and achieves

it on a larger scale in a tract of many acres. The garden is shadowed with trees of a fine growth, standing alone, or in dusky groves and dense entanglements, pervaded by woodland paths; and emerging from these pleasant glooms, we come upon a breadth of sunshine, where the green-sward—so vividly green that it has a kind of lustre in it—is spotted with beds of gemlike flowers. Rustic chairs and benches are scattered about, some of them ponderously fashioned out of the stumps of obtruncated trees, and others more artfully made with intertwining branches, or perhaps an imitation of such frail handiwork in iron. In a central part of the garden is an archery-ground, where laughing maidens practise at the butts, generally missing their ostensible mark, but, by the mere grace of their action, sending an unseen shaft into some young man's heart. There is space, moreover, within these precincts, for an artificial lake, with a little green island in the midst of it; both lake and island being the haunt of swans, whose aspect and movement in the water are most beautiful and stately,—most infirm, disjointed, and decrepit, when, unadvisedly, they see fit to emerge, and try to walk upon dry

land. In the latter case, they look like a breed of uncommonly ill-contrived geese; and I record the matter here for the sake of the moral,—that we should never pass judgment on the merits of any person or thing, unless we behold them in the sphere and circumstances to which they are specially adapted. In still another part of the garden there is a labyrinthine maze, formed of an intricacy of hedge-bordered walks, involving himself in which, a man might wander for hours inextricably within a circuit of only a few yards. It seemed to me a sad emblem of the mental and moral perplexities in which we sometimes go astray, petty in scope, yet large enough to entangle a lifetime, and bewilder us with a weary movement, but no genuine progress.

The Leam—the "high-complexioned Leam," as Drayton calls it—after drowsing across the principal street of the town beneath a handsome bridge, skirts along the margin of the garden without any perceptible flow. Heretofore I had fancied the Concord the laziest river in the world, but now assign that amiable distinction to the little English stream. Its water is by no means transparent, but has a greenish, goose-puddly hue,

which, however, accords well with the other colouring and characteristics of the scene, and is disagreeable neither to sight nor smell. Certainly, this river is a perfect feature of that gentle picturesqueness in which England is so rich, sleeping, as it does, beneath a margin of willows that droop into its bosom, and other trees, of deeper verdure than our own country can boast, inclining lovingly over it. On the garden-side it is bordered by a shadowy, secluded grove, with winding paths among its boskiness, affording many a peep at the river's imperceptible lapse and tranquil gleam; and on the opposite shore stands the priory-church, with its churchyard full of shrubbery and tombstones.

The business portion of the town clusters about the banks of the Leam, and is naturally densest around the well to which the modern settlement owes its existence. Here are the commercial inns, the post-office, the furniture dealers, the ironmongers, and all the heavy and homely establishments that connect themselves even with the airiest modes of human life; while upward from the river, by a long and gentle ascent, rises the principal street, which is very bright and cheerful

in its physiognomy, and adorned with shop-fronts almost as splendid as those of London, though on a diminutive scale. There are likewise side-streets and cross-streets, many of which are bordered with the beautiful Warwickshire elm, a most unusual kind of adornment for an English town; and spacious avenues, wide enough to afford room for stately groves, with foot-paths running beneath the lofty shade, and rooks cawing and chattering so high in the tree-tops that their voices get musical before reaching the earth. The houses are mostly built in blocks and ranges, in which every separate tenement is a repetition of its fellow, though the architecture of the different ranges is sufficiently various. Some of them are almost palatial in size and sumptuousness of arrangement. Then, on the outskirts of the town, there are detached villas, enclosed within that separate domain of high stone fence and embowered shrubbery which an Englishman so loves to build and plant around his abode, presenting to the public only an iron gate, with a gravelled carriage-drive winding away towards the half-hidden mansion. Whether in street or suburb, Leamington may fairly be called beauti-

ful, and, at some points, magnificent; but by-and-by you become doubtfully suspicious of a somewhat unreal finery: it is pretentious, though not glaringly so; it has been built, with malice aforethought, as a place of gentility and enjoyment. Moreover, splendid as the houses look, and comfortable as they often are, there is a nameless something about them, betokening that they have not grown out of human hearts, but are the creations of a skilfully applied human intellect: no man has reared any one of them, whether stately or humble, to be his life-long residence, wherein to bring up his children, who are to inherit it as a home. They are nicely contrived lodging-houses, one and all,—the best as well as the shabbiest of them,—and therefore inevitably lack some nameless property that a home should have. This was the case with our own little snuggery in Lansdowne Circus, as with all the rest; it had not grown out of anybody's individual need, but was built to let or sell, and was therefore like a ready-made garment,—a tolerable fit, but only tolerable.

All these blocks, ranges, and detached villas are adorned with the finest and most aristocratic

names that I have found anywhere in England, except, perhaps, in Bath, which is the great metropolis of that second-class gentility with which watering-places are chiefly populated. Lansdowne Crescent, Lansdowne Circus, Lansdowne Terrace, Regent Street, Warwick Street, Clarendon Street, the Upper and Lower Parade: such are a few of the designations. Parade, indeed, is a well-chosen name for the principal street, along which the population of the idle town draws itself out for daily review and display. I only wish that my descriptive powers would enable me to throw off a picture of the scene at a sunny noontide, individualizing each character with a touch: the great people alighting from their carriages at the principal shop-doors; the elderly ladies and infirm Indian officers drawn along in Bath-chairs; the comely, rather than pretty, English girls, with their deep, healthy bloom, which an American taste is apt to deem fitter for a milkmaid than for a lady; the moustached gentlemen with frogged surtouts and a military air; the nursemaids and chubby children, but no chubbier than our own, and scampering on slenderer legs; the sturdy figure of John Bull

in all varieties and of all ages, but ever with the stamp of authenticity somewhere about him.

To say the truth, I have been holding the pen over my paper, purposing to write a descriptive paragraph or two about the throng on the principal parade of Leamington, so arranging it as to present a sketch of the British out-of-door aspect on a morning walk of gentility; but I find no personages quite sufficiently distinct and individual in my memory to supply the materials of such a panorama. Oddly enough, the only figure that comes fairly forth to my mind's eye is that of a dowager, one of hundreds whom I used to marvel at, all over England, but who have scarcely a representative among our own ladies of autumnal life, so thin, careworn, and frail, as age usually makes the latter.

I have heard a good deal of the tenacity with which English ladies retain their personal beauty to a late period of life; but (not to suggest that an American eye needs use and cultivation before it can quite appreciate the charm of English beauty at any age) it strikes me that an English lady of fifty is apt to become a creature less refined and delicate, so far as her physique goes, than anything

that we western people class under the name of woman. She has an awful ponderosity of frame, not pulpy, like the looser development of our few fat women, but massive with solid beef and streaky tallow; so that (though struggling manfully against the idea) you inevitably think of her as made up of steaks and sirloins. When she walks, her advance is elephantine. When she sits down, it is on a great round space of her Maker's foot-stool, where she looks as if nothing could ever move her. She imposes awe and respect by the muchness of her personality, to such a degree that you probably credit her with far greater moral and intellectual force than she can fairly claim. Her visage is usually grim and stern, seldom positively forbidding, yet calmly terrible, not merely by its breadth and weight of feature, but because it seems to express so much well-founded self-reliance, such acquaintance with the world, its toils, troubles, and dangers, and such sturdy capacity for trampling down a foe. Without anything positively salient, or actively offensive, or, indeed, unjustly formidable to her neighbours, she has the effect of a seventy-four gun-ship in time of peace; for, while you assure yourself that there is no real

danger, you cannot help thinking how tremendous would be her onset, if pugnaciously inclined, and how futile the effort to inflict any counter-injury. She certainly looks tenfold—nay, a hundred-fold —better able to take care of herself than our slender-framed and haggard womankind; but I have not found reason to suppose that the English dowager of fifty has actually greater courage, fortitude, and strength of character than our women of similar age, or even a tougher physical endurance than they. Morally, she is strong, I suspect, only in society, and in the common routine of social affairs, and would be found powerless and timid in any exceptional strait that might call for energy outside of the conventionalities amid which she has grown up.

You can meet this figure in the street, and live, and even smile at the recollection. But conceive of her in a ball-room, with the bare, brawny arms that she invariably displays there, and all the other corresponding development, such as is beautiful in the maiden blossom, but a spectacle to howl at in such an overblown cabbage-rose as this.

Yet, somewhere in this enormous bulk there

must be hidden the modest, slender, violet-nature of a girl, whom an alien mass of earthliness has unkindly overgrown; for an English maiden in her teens, though very seldom so pretty as our own damsels, possesses, to say the truth, a certain charm of half-blossom, and delicately folded leaves, and tender womanhood shielded by maidenly reserves, with which, somehow or other, our American girls often fail to adorn themselves during an appreciable moment. It is a pity that the English violet should grow into such an outrageously developed peony as I have attempted to describe. I wonder whether a middle-aged husband ought to be considered as legally married to all the accretions that have overgrown the slenderness of his bride, since he led her to the altar, and which make her so much more than he ever bargained for! Is it not a sounder view of the case, that the matrimonial bond cannot be held to include the three-fourths of the wife that had no existence when the ceremony was performed? And as a matter of conscience and good morals, ought not an English married pair to insist upon the celebration of a Silver Wedding at the end of twenty-five years, in order to legalize and mutually

appropriate that corporeal growth of which both parties have individually come into possession since they were pronounced one flesh?

The chief enjoyment of my several visits to Leamington lay in rural walks about the neighbourhood, and in jaunts to places of note and interest, which are particularly abundant in that region. The high-roads are made pleasant to the traveller by a border of trees, and often afford him the hospitality of a wayside bench beneath a comfortable shade. But a fresher delight is to be found in the foot-paths, which go wandering away from stile to stile, along hedges, and across broad fields, and through wooded parks, leading you to little hamlets of thatched cottages, ancient, solitary farm-houses, picturesque old mills, streamlets, pools, and all those quiet, secret, unexpected, yet strangely familiar features of English scenery that Tennyson shows us in his idyls and eclogues. These by-paths admit the wayfarer into the very heart of rural life, and yet do not burden him with a sense of intrusiveness. He has a right to go whithersoever they lead him; for, with all their shaded privacy, they are as much the property of the public as the dusty high-road itself,

and even by an older tenure. Their antiquity probably exceeds that of the Roman ways; the footsteps of the aboriginal Britons first wore away the grass, and the natural flow of intercourse between village and village has kept the track bare ever since. An American farmer would plough across any such path, and obliterate it with his hills of potatoes and Indian corn; but here it is protected by law, and still more by the sacredness that inevitably springs up, in this soil, along the well-defined footprints of centuries. Old associations are sure to be fragrant herbs in English nostrils: we pull them up as weeds.

I remember such a path, the access to which is from Lovers' Grove, a range of tall old oaks and elms on a high hill-top, whence there is a view of Warwick Castle, and a wide extent of landscape, beautiful, though bedimmed with English mist. This particular foot-path, however, is not a remarkably good specimen of its kind, since it leads into no hollows and seclusions, and soon terminates in a high-road. It connects Leamington by a short cut with the small neighbouring village of Lillington, a place which impresses an American

observer with its many points of contrast to the rural aspects of his own country. The village consists chiefly of one row of contiguous dwellings, separated only by party-walls, but ill-matched among themselves, being of different heights, and apparently of various ages, though all are of an antiquity which we should call venerable. Some of the windows are leaden-framed lattices, opening on hinges. These houses are mostly built of gray stone: but others, in the same range, are of brick, and one or two are in a very old fashion,—Elizabethan, or still older,—having a ponderous framework of oak, painted black, and filled in with plastered stone or bricks. Judging by the patches of repair, the oak seems to be the more durable part of the structure. Some of the roofs are covered with earthern tiles; others (more decayed and poverty-stricken) with thatch, out of which sprouts a luxurious vegetation of grass, house-leeks, and yellow flowers. What especially strikes an American is the lack of that insulated space, the intervening gardens, grass-plots, orchards, broad-spreading shade-trees, which occur between our own village-houses. These English dwellings have no such separate surroundings;

they all grow together, like the cells of a honeycomb.

Beyond the first row of houses, and hidden from it by a turn of the road, there was another row (or block, as we should call it) of small old cottages, stuck one against another, with their thatched roofs forming a single contiguity. These, I presume, were the habitations of the poorest order of rustic labourers; and the narrow precincts of each cottage, as well as the close neighbourhood of the whole, gave the impression of a stifled, unhealthy atmosphere among the occupants. It seemed impossible that there should be a cleanly reserve, a proper self-respect among individuals, or a wholesome unfamiliarity between families, where human life was crowded and massed into such intimate communities as these. Nevertheless, not to look beyond the outside, I never saw a prettier rural scene than was presented by this range of contiguous huts. For in front of the whole row was a luxuriant and well-trimmed hawthorn hedge, and belonging to each cottage was a little square of garden-ground, separated from its neighbours by a line of the same verdant fence. The gardens were chockfull, not of esculent

vegetables, but of flowers, familiar ones, but very bright-coloured, and shrubs of box, some of which were trimmed into artistic shapes; and I remember, before one door, a representation of Warwick Castle, made of oyster-shells. The cottagers evidently loved the little nests in which they dwelt, and did their best to make them beautiful, and succeeded more than tolerably well,—so kindly did Nature help their humble efforts with its verdure, flowers, moss, lichens, and the green things that grew out of the thatch. Through some of the open doorways we saw plump children rolling about on the stone floors, and their mothers, by no means very pretty, but as happy-looking as mothers generally are; and while we gazed at these domestic matters, an old woman rushed wildly out of one of the gates, upholding a shovel on which she clanged and clattered with a key. At first we fancied that she intended an onslaught against ourselves, but soon discovered that a more dangerous enemy was abroad; for the old lady's bees had swarmed, and the air was full of them, whizzing by our heads like bullets.

Not far from these two rows of houses and cottages, a green lane, overshadowed with trees,

turned aside from the main road, and tended towards a square, gray tower, the battlements of which were just high enough to be visible above the foliage. Wending our way thitherward, we found the very picture and ideal of a country church and churchyard. The tower seemed to be of Norman architecture, low, massive, and crowned with battlements. The body of the church was of very modest dimensions, and the eaves so low that I could touch them with my walking-stick. We looked into the windows and beheld the dim and quiet interior, a narrow space, but venerable with the consecration of many centuries, and keeping its sanctity as entire and inviolate as that of a vast cathedral. The nave was divided from the side aisles of the church by pointed arches resting on very sturdy pillars: it was good to see how solemnly they held themselves to their age-long task of supporting that lowly roof. There was a small organ, suited in size to the vaulted hollow, which it weekly filled with religious sound. On the opposite wall of the church, between two windows, was a mural tablet of white marble, with an inscription in black letters,—the only such memorial that I could

discern, although many dead people doubtless lay beneath the floor, and had paved it with their ancient tombstones, as is customary in old English churches. There were no modern painted windows, flaring with raw colours, nor other gorgeous adornments, such as the present taste for mediæval restoration often patches upon the decorous simplicity of the gray village-church. It is probably the worshipping-place of no more distinguished a congregation than the farmers and peasantry who inhabit the houses and cottages which I have just described. Had the lord of the manor been one of the parishioners, there would have been an eminent pew near the chancel, walled high about, curtained, and softly cushioned, warmed by a fireplace of its own, and distinguished by hereditary tablets and escutcheons on the enclosed stone pillar.

A well-trodden path led across the churchyard, and the gate being on the latch, we entered, and walked round among the graves and monuments. The latter were chiefly head-stones, none of which were very old, so far as was discoverable by the dates; some, indeed, in so ancient a cemetery, were disagreeably new, with inscriptions glittering

like sunshine, in gold letters. The ground must have been dug over and over again, innumerable times, until the soil is made up of what was once human clay, out of which have sprung successive crops of gravestones, that flourish their allotted time, and disappear, like the weeds and flowers in their briefer period. The English climate is very unfavourable to the endurance of memorials in the open air. Twenty years of it suffice to give as much antiquity of aspect, whether to tombstone or edifice, as a hundred years of our own drier atmosphere,—so soon do the drizzly rains and constant moisture corrode the surface of marble or freestone. Sculptured edges lose their sharpness in a year or two; yellow lichens overspread a beloved name, and obliterate it while it is yet fresh upon some survivor's heart. Time gnaws an English gravestone with wonderful appetite; and when the inscription is quite illegible, the sexton takes the useless slab away, and, perhaps, makes a hearthstone of it, and digs up the unripe bones which it ineffectually tried to memorialize, and gives the bed to another sleeper. In the Charter Street burial-ground at Salem, and in the old graveyard on the hill at Ipswich, I have seen

more ancient gravestones, with legible inscriptions on them, than in any English churchyard.

And yet this same ungenial climate, hostile as it generally is to the long remembrance of departed people, has sometimes a lovely way of dealing with the records on certain monuments that lie horizontally in the open air. The rain falls into the deep incisions of the letters, and has scarcely time to be dried away before another shower sprinkles the flat stone again, and replenishes those little reservoirs. The unseen, mysterious seeds of mosses find their way into the lettered furrows, and are made to germinate by the continual moisture and watery sunshine of the English sky; and, by-and-by, in a year, or two years, or many years, behold the complete inscription—

Here Lyeth the Body,

and all the rest of the tender falsehood—beautifully embossed in raised letters of living green, a bas-relief of velvet moss on the marble slab! It becomes more legible, under the skyey influences, after the world has forgotten the deceased, than when it was fresh from the stone-cutter's hands. It outlives the grief of friends. I first saw an

example of this in Bebbington churchyard, in Cheshire, and thought that Nature must needs have had a special tenderness for the person (no noted man, however, in the world's history) so long ago laid beneath that stone, since she took such wonderful pains to "keep his memory green." Perhaps the proverbial phrase just quoted may have had its origin in the natural phenomenon here described.

While we rested ourselves on a horizontal monument, which was elevated just high enough to be a convenient seat, I observed that one of the gravestones lay very close to the church,—so close that the droppings of the eaves would fall upon it. It seemed as if the inmate of that grave had desired to creep under the church-wall. On closer inspection, we found an almost illegible epitaph on the stone, and with difficulty made out this forlorn verse:—

Poorly lived,
And poorly died,
Poorly buried,
And no one cried.

It would be hard to compress the story of a cold and luckless life, death, and burial into fewer words, or more impressive ones; at least, we found

them impressive, perhaps because we had to re-create the inscription by scraping away the lichens from the faintly-traced letters. The grave was on the shady and damp side of the church, endwise towards it, the head-stone being within about three feet of the foundation-wall; so that, unless the poor man was a dwarf, he must have been doubled up to fit him into his final resting place. No wonder that his epitaph murmured against so poor a burial as this! His name, as well as I could make it out, was Treeo,—John Treeo, I think,—and he died in 1810, at the age of seventy-four. The gravestone is so overgrown with grass and weeds, so covered with unsightly lichens, and so crumbly with time and foul weather, that it is questionable whether anybody will ever be at the trouble of deciphering it again. But there is a quaint and sad kind of enjoyment in defeating (to such slight degree as my pen may do it) the probabilities of oblivion for poor John Treeo, and asking a little sympathy for him, half a century after his death, and making him better and more widely known, at least, than any other slumberer in Lillington churchyard: he having been, as appearances go, the outcast of them all.

You find similar old churches and villages in all the neighbouring country, at the distance of every two or three miles; and I describe them, not as being rare, but because they are so common and characteristic. The village of Whitnash, within twenty minutes' walk of Leamington, looks as secluded, as rural, and as little disturbed by the fashions of to-day, as if Dr. Jephson had never developed all those Parades and Crescents out of his magic well. I used to wonder whether the inhabitants had ever yet heard of railways, or, at their slow rate of progress, had even reached the epoch of stage-coaches. As you approach the village, while it is yet unseen, you observe a tall, overshadowing canopy of elm-tree tops, beneath which you almost hesitate to follow the public road, on account of the remoteness that seems to exist between the precincts of this old-world community and the thronged modern street out of which you have so recently emerged. Venturing onward, however, you soon find yourself in the heart of Whitnash, and see an irregular ring of ancient rustic dwellings surrounding the village-green, on one side of which stands the church, with its square Norman tower and battle-

ments, while close adjoining is the vicarage, made picturesque by peaks and gables. At first glimpse, none of the houses appear to be less than two or three centuries old, and they are of the ancient, wooden-framed fashion, with thatched roofs, which give them the air of birds' nests, thereby assimilating them closely to the simplicity of nature.

The church-tower is mossy and much gnawed by time; it has narrow loopholes up and down its front and sides, and an arched window over the low portal, set with small panes of glass, cracked, dim, and irregular, through which a bygone age is peeping out into the daylight. Some of those old, grotesque faces, called gargoyles, are seen on the projections of the architecture. The churchyard is very small, and is encompassed by a gray stone fence that looks as ancient as the church itself. In front of the tower, on the village-green, is a yew-tree of incalculable age, with a vast circumference of trunk, but a very scanty head of foliage; though its boughs still keep some of the vitality which perhaps was in its early prime when the Saxon invaders founded Whitnash. A thousand years is no extraordinary antiquity in the lifetime of a

yew. We were pleasantly startled, however, by discovering an exuberance of more youthful life than we had thought possible in so old a tree; for the faces of two children laughed at us out of an opening in the trunk, which had become hollow with long decay. On one side of the yew stood a framework of worm-eaten timber, the use and meaning of which puzzled me exceedingly, till I made it out to be the village-stocks: a public institution that, in its day, had doubtless hampered many a pair of shank-bones, now crumbling in the adjacent churchyard. It is not to be supposed, however, that this old-fashioned mode of punishment is still in vogue among the good people of Whitnash. The vicar of the parish has antiquarian propensities, and had probably dragged the stocks out of some dusty hiding-place, and set them up on their former site as a curiosity.

I disquiet myself in vain with the effort to hit upon some characteristic feature, or assemblage of features, that shall convey to the reader the influence of hoar antiquity, lingering into the present daylight, as I so often felt it in these old English scenes. It is only an American who

can feel it; and even he begins to find himself growing insensible to its effect, after a long residence in England. But while you are still new in the old country, it thrills you with strange emotion to think that this little church of Whitnash, humble as it seems, stood for ages under the Catholic faith, and has not materially changed since Wickliffe's days, and that it looked as gray as now in Bloody Mary's time, and that Cromwell's troopers broke off the stone noses of those same gargoyles that are now grinning in your face. So, too, with the immemorial yew-tree: you see its great roots grasping hold of the earth like gigantic claws, clinging so sturdily that no effort of time can wrench them away; and there being life in the old tree, you feel all the more as if a contemporary witness were telling you of the things that have been. It has lived among men, and been a familiar object to them, and seen them brought to be christened and married and buried in the neighbouring church and churchyard, through so many centuries, that it knows all about our race, so far as fifty generations of the Whitnash people can supply such knowledge.

And, after all, what a weary life it must have been for the old tree! Tedious beyond imagination! Such, I think, is the final impression on the mind of an American visitor, when his delight at finding something permanent begins to yield to his western love of change, and he becomes sensible of the heavy air of a spot where the forefathers and foremothers have grown up together, intermarried, and died, through a long succession of lives, without any intermixture of new elements, till family features and character are all run in the same inevitable mould. Life is there fossilized in its greenest leaf. The man who died yesterday or ever so long ago walks the village-street to-day, and chooses the same wife that he married a hundred years since, and must be buried again to-morrow under the same kindred dust that has already covered him half a score of times. The stone threshold of his cottage is worn away with his hob-nailed footsteps, shuffling over it from the reign of the first Plantagenet to that of Victoria. Better than this is the lot of our restless countrymen, whose modern instinct bids them tend always towards "fresh woods and pastures new." Rather than

such monotony of sluggish ages, loitering on a village-green, toiling in hereditary fields, listening to the parson's drone lengthened through centuries in the gray Norman church, let us welcome whatever change may come,—change of place, social customs, political institutions, modes of worship,—trusting, that, if all present things shall vanish, they will but make room for better systems, and for a higher type of man to clothe his life in them, and to fling them off in turn.

Nevertheless, while an American willingly accepts growth and change as the law of his own national and private existence, he has a singular tenderness for the stone-incrusted institutions of the mother-country. The reason may be (though I should prefer a more generous explanation) that he recognizes the tendency of these hardened forms to stiffen her joints and fetter her ankles, in the race and rivalry of improvement. I hated to see so much as a twig of ivy wrenched away from an old wall in England. Yet change is at work, even in such a village as Whitnash. At a subsequent visit, looking more critically at the irregular circle of dwellings that surround the yew-tree and confront the church, I perceived that some of the

houses must have been built within no long time, although the thatch, the quaint gables, and the old oaken framework of the others diffused an air of antiquity over the whole assemblage. The church itself was undergoing repair and restoration, which is but another name for change.. Masons were making patchwork on the front of the tower, and were sawing a slab of stone and piling up bricks to strengthen the side-wall, or possibly to enlarge the ancient edifice by an additional aisle. Moreover, they had dug an immense pit in the churchyard, long and broad, and fifteen feet deep, two-thirds of which profundity were discoloured by human decay, and mixed up with crumbly bones. What this excavation was intended for I could nowise imagine, unless it were the very pit in which Longfellow bids the "Dead Past bury its Dead," and Whitnash, of all places in the world, were going to avail itself of our poet's suggestion. If so, it must needs be confessed that many picturesque and delightful things would be thrown into the hole, and covered out of sight for ever.

The article which I am writing has taken its own course, and occupied itself almost wholly with country churches; whereas I had purposed to

attempt a description of some of the many old towns —Warwick, Coventry, Kenilworth, Stratford-on-Avon—which lie within an easy scope of Leamington. And still another church presents itself to my remembrance. It is that of Hatton, on which I stumbled in the course of a forenoon's ramble, and paused a little while to look at it for the sake of old Dr. Parr, who was once its vicar. Hatton, so far as I could discover, has no public-house, no shop, no contiguity of roofs, (as in most English villages, however small,) but is merely an ancient neighbourhood of farm-houses, spacious, and standing wide apart, each within its own precincts, and offering a most comfortable aspect of orchards, harvest-fields, barns, stacks, and all manner of rural plenty. It seemed to be a community of old settlers, among whom everything had been going on prosperously since an epoch beyond the memory of man; and they kept a certain privacy among themselves, and dwelt on a cross-road at the entrance of which was a barred gate, hospitably open, but still impressing me with a sense of scarcely warrantable intrusion. After all, in some shady nook of those gentle Warwickshire slopes there may have been a denser and

more populous settlement, styled Hatton, which I never reached.

Emerging from the by-road, and entering upon one that crossed it at right angles and led to Warwick, I espied the church of Dr. Parr. Like the others which I have described, it had a low stone tower, square, and battlemented at its summit: for all these little churches seem to have been built on the same model, and nearly at the same measurement, and have even a greater family likeness than the cathedrals. As I approached, the bell of the tower (a remarkably deep-toned bell, considering how small it was) flung its voice abroad, and told me that it was noon. The church stands among its graves, a little removed from the wayside, quite apart from any collection of houses, and with no signs of a vicarage; it is a good deal shadowed by trees, and not wholly destitute of ivy. The body of the edifice, unfortunately, (and it is an outrage which the English churchwardens are fond of perpetrating,) has been newly covered with a yellowish plaster or wash, so as quite to destroy the aspect of antiquity, except upon the tower, which wears the dark gray hue of many centuries. The chancel window is painted with a representa-

tion of Christ upon the cross, and all the other windows are full of painted or stained glass, but none of it ancient, nor (if it be fair to judge from without of what ought to be seen within) possessing any of the tender glory that should be the inheritance of this branch of art, revived from mediæval times. I stepped over the graves, and peeped in at two or three of the windows, and saw the snug interior of the church glimmering through the many-coloured panes, like a show of commonplace objects under the fantastic influence of a dream: for the floor was covered with modern pews, very like what we may see in a New England meeting-house, though, I think, a little more favourable than those would be to the quiet slumbers of the Hatton farmers and their families. Those who slept under Dr. Parr's preaching now prolong their nap, I suppose, in the churchyard round about, and can scarcely have drawn much spiritual benefit from any truths that he contrived to tell them in their lifetime. It struck me as a rare example (even where examples are numerous) of a man utterly misplaced, that this enormous scholar, great in the classic tongues, and inevitably converting his own simplest vernacular into a

learned language, should have been set up in this homely pulpit, and ordained to preach salvation to a rustic audience, to whom it is difficult to imagine how he could ever have spoken one available word.

Almost always, in visiting such scenes as I have been attempting to describe, I had a singular sense of having been there before. The ivy-grown English churches (even that of Bebbington, the first that I beheld) were quite as familiar to me, when fresh from home, as the old wooden meeting-house in Salem, which used, on wintry sabbaths, to be the frozen purgatory of my childhood. This was a bewildering, yet very delightful emotion, fluttering about me like a faint summer wind, and filling my imagination with a thousand half-remembrances, which looked as vivid as sunshine, at a side glance, but faded quite away whenever I attempted to grasp and define them. Of course, the explanation of the mystery was, that history, poetry, and fiction, books of travel, and the talk of tourists, had given me pretty accurate preconceptions of the common objects of English scenery, and these, being long ago vivified by a youthful fancy, had insensibly taken their places among the

images of things actually seen. Yet the illusion was often so powerful, that I almost doubted whether such airy remembrances might not be a sort of innate idea, the print of a recollection in some ancestral mind, transmitted, with fainter and fainter impress through several descents, to my own. I felt, indeed, like the stalwart progenitor in person, returning to the hereditary haunts after more than two hundred years, and finding the church, the hall, the farm-house, the cottage, hardly changed during his long absence,—the same shady by-paths and hedge-lanes, the same veiled sky, and green lustre of the lawns and fields,—while his own affinities for these things, a little obscured by disuse, were reviving at every step.

An American is not very apt to love the English people, as a whole, on whatever length of acquaintance. I fancy that they would value our regard, and even reciprocate it in their ungracious way, if we could give it to them in spite of all rebuffs; but they are beset by a curious and inevitable infelicity, which compels them, as it were, to keep up what they seem to consider a wholesome bitterness of feeling between themselves and all other

nationalities, especially that of America. They will never confess it; nevertheless, it is as essential a tonic to them as their bitter ale. Therefore—and possibly, too, from a similar narrowness in his own character—an American seldom feels quite as if he were at home among the English people. If he do so, he has ceased to be an American. But it requires no long residence to make him love their island, and appreciate it as thoroughly as they themselves do. For my part, I used to wish that we could annex it, transferring their thirty millions of inhabitants to some convenient wilderness in the great West, and putting half or a quarter as many of ourselves into their places. The change would be beneficial to both parties. We, in our dry atmosphere, are getting too nervous, haggard, dyspeptic, extenuated, unsubstantial, theoretic, and need to be made grosser. John Bull, on the other hand, has grown bulbous, long-bodied, short-legged, heavy-witted, material, and, in a word, too intensely English. In a few more centuries, he will be the earthliest creature that ever the earth saw. Heretofore Providence has obviated such a result by timely intermixtures of alien races with the old English stock; so that each successive

conquest of England has proved a victory, by the revivification and improvement of its native manhood. Cannot America and England hit upon some scheme to secure even greater advantages to both nations?

ABOUT WARWICK.

BETWEEN bright, new Leamington, the growth of the present century, and rusty Warwick, founded by King Cymbeline in the twilight ages, a thousand years before the mediæval darkness, there are two roads, either of which may be measured by a sober-paced pedestrian in less than half an hour.

One of these avenues flows out of the midst of the smart parades and crescents of the former town,—along by hedges and beneath the shadow of great elms, past stuccoed Elizabethan villas and way-side ale-houses, and through a hamlet of modern aspect,—and runs straight into the principal thoroughfare of Warwick. The battlemented turrets of the castle, embowered half-way up in foliage, and the tall slender tower of St. Mary's Church, rising from among clustered roofs, have

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been visible almost from the commencement of the walk. Near the entrance of the town stands St. John's School-house, a picturesque old edifice of stone, with four peaked gables in a row, alternately plain and ornamented, and wide, projecting windows, and a spacious and venerable porch, all overgrown with moss and ivy, and shut in from the world by a high stone fence, not less mossy than the gabled front. There is an iron gate, through the rusty open-work of which you see a grassy lawn, and almost expect to meet the shy, curious eyes of the little boys of past generations, peeping forth from their infantile antiquity into the strangeness of our present life. I find a peculiar charm in these long-established English schools, where the school-boy of to-day sits side by side, as it were, with his great-grandsire, on the same old benches, and often, I believe, thumbs a later, but unimproved edition, of the same old grammar or arithmetic. The new-fangled notions of a Yankee school-committee would madden many a pedagogue, and shake down the roof of many a time-honoured seat of learning, in the mother-country.

At this point, however, we will turn back, in

order to follow up the other road from Leamington, which was the one that I loved best to take. It pursues a straight and level course, bordered by wide gravel walks and overhung by the frequent elm, with here a cottage and there a villa, on one side a wooded plantation, and on the other a rich field of grass or grain, until, turning at right angles, it brings you to an arched bridge over the Avon. Its parapet is a balustrade carved out of freestone, into the soft substance of which a multitude of persons have engraved their names or initials, many of them now illegible, while others, more deeply cut, are illuminated with fresh green moss. These tokens indicate a famous spot; and casting our eyes along the smooth gleam and shadow of the quiet stream, through a vista of willows that droop on either side into the water, we behold the gray magnificence of Warwick Castle, uplifting itself among stately trees, and rearing its turrets high above their loftiest branches. We can scarcely think the scene real, so completely do those machicolated towers, the long line of battlements, the massive buttresses, the high-windowed walls, shape out our indistinct ideas of the antique time. It might rather seem

as if the sleepy river (being Shakspeare's Avon, and often, no doubt, the mirror of his gorgeous visions) were dreaming now of a lordly residence that stood here many centuries ago; and this fantasy is strengthened, when you observe that the image in the tranquil water has all the distinctness of the actual structure. Either might be the reflection of the other. Wherever Time has gnawed one of the stones, you see the mark of his tooth just as plainly in the sunken reflection. Each is so perfect, that the upper vision seems a castle in the air, and the lower one an old stronghold of feudalism, miraculously kept from decay in an enchanted river.

A ruinous and ivy-grown bridge, that projects from the bank a little on the hither side of the castle, has the effect of making the scene appear more entirely apart from the every-day world, for it ends abruptly in the middle of the stream,—so that, if a cavalcade of the knights and ladies of romance should issue from the old walls, they could never tread on earthly ground, any more than we, approaching from the side of modern realism, can overleap the gulf between our domain and theirs. Yet, if we seek to disenchant our-

selves, it may readily be done. Crossing the bridge on which we stand, and passing a little farther on, we come to the entrance of the castle, abutting on the highway, and hospitably open at certain hours to all curious pilgrims who choose to disburse half-a-crown or so toward the support of the earl's domestics. The sight of that long series of historic rooms, full of such splendours and rarities as a great English family necessarily gathers about itself, in its hereditary abode, and in the lapse of ages, is well worth the money, or ten times as much, if indeed the value of the spectacle could be reckoned in money's-worth. But after the attendant has hurried you from end to end of the edifice, repeating a guide-book by rote, and exorcising each successive hall of its poetic glamour and witchcraft by the mere tone in which he talks about it, you will make the doleful discovery that Warwick Castle has ceased to be a dream. It is better, methinks, to linger on the bridge, gazing at Cæsar's Tower and Guy's Tower in the dim English sunshine above, and in the placid Avon below, and still keep them as thoughts in your own mind, than climb to their summits, or touch even a stone of their actual

substance. They will have all the more reality for you, as stalwart relics of immemorial time, if you are reverent enough to leave them in the intangible sanctity of a poetic vision.

From the bridge over the Avon, the road passes in front of the castle-gate, and soon enters the principal street of Warwick, a little beyond St John's School-House, already described. Chester itself, most antique of English towns, can hardly show quainter architectural shapes than many of the buildings that border this street. They are mostly of the timber-and-plaster kind, with bowed and decrepit ridge-poles, and a whole chronology of various patchwork in their walls; their low-browed door-ways open upon a sunken floor; their projecting stories peep, as it were, over one another's shoulders, and rise into a multiplicity of peaked gables; they have curious windows, breaking out irregularly all over the house, some even in the roof, set in their own little peaks, opening lattice-wise, and furnished with twenty small panes of lozenge-shaped glass. The architecture of these edifices (a visible oaken framework, showing the whole skeleton of the house,—as if a man's bones should be arranged on his

outside, and his flesh seen through the interstices) is often imitated by modern builders, and with sufficiently picturesque effect. The objection is, that such houses, like all imitations of by-gone styles, have an air of affectation; they do not seem to be built in earnest; they are no better than playthings, or overgrown baby-houses, in which nobody should be expected to encounter the serious realities of either birth or death. Besides, originating nothing, we leave no fashions for another age to copy, when we ourselves shall have grown antique.

Old as it looks, all this portion of Warwick has overbrimmed, as it were, from the original settlement, being outside of the ancient wall. The street soon runs under an arched gateway, with a church or some other venerable structure above it, and admits us into the heart of the town. At one of my first visits, I witnessed a military display. A regiment of Warwickshire militia, probably commanded by the earl, was going through its drill in the market-place; and on the collar of one of the officers was embroidered the Bear and Ragged Staff, which has been the cognizance of the Warwick earldom from time immemorial. The soldiers

were sturdy young men, with the simple, stolid, yet kindly, faces of English rustics, looking exceedingly well in a body, but slouching into a yeoman-like carriage and appearance, the moment they were dismissed from drill. Squads of them were distributed everywhere about the streets, and sentinels were posted at various points; and I saw a sergeant, with a great key in his hand, (big enough to have been the key of the castle's main entrance when the gate was thickest and heaviest,) apparently setting a guard. Thus, centuries after feudal times are past, we find warriors still gathering under the old castle walls, and commanded by a feudal lord, just as in the days of the King-maker, who, no doubt, often mustered his retainers in the same market-place where I beheld this modern regiment.

The interior of the town wears a less old-fashioned aspect than the suburbs through which we approach it; and the High Street has shops with modern plate-glass, and buildings with stuccoed fronts, exhibiting as few projections to hang a thought or sentiment upon as if an architect of to-day had planned them. And, indeed, so far as their surface goes, they are perhaps new enough

to stand unabashed in an American street; but behind these renovated faces, with their monotonous lack of expression, there is probably the substance of the same old town that wore a Gothic exterior in the middle ages. The street is an emblem of England itself. What seems new in it is chiefly a skilful and fortunate adaptation of what such a people as ourselves would destroy. The new things are based and supported on sturdy old things, and derive a massive strength from their deep and immemorial foundations, though with such limitations and impediments as only an Englishman could endure. But he likes to feel the weight of all the past upon his back; and, moreover, the antiquity that overburdens him has taken root in his being, and has grown to be rather a hump than a pack, so that there is no getting rid of it without tearing his whole structure to pieces. In my judgment, as he appears to be sufficiently comfortable under the mouldy accretion, he had better stumble on with it as long as he can. He presents a spectacle which is by no means without its charms for a disinterested and unincumbered observer.

When the old edifice, or the antiquated custom

or institution, appears in its pristine form, without any attempt at intermarrying it with modern fashions, an American cannot but admire the picturesque effect produced by the sudden cropping up of an apparently dead-and-buried state of society into the actual present, of which he is himself a part. We need not go far in Warwick without encountering an instance of the kind. Proceeding westward through the town, we find ourselves confronted by a huge mass of natural rock, hewn into something like architectural shape, and penetrated by a vaulted passage, which may well have been one of King Cymbeline's original gateways; and on the top of the rock, over the archway, sits a small, old church, communicating with an ancient edifice, or assemblage of edifices, that look down from a similar elevation on the side of the street. A range of trees half hides the latter establishment from the sun. It presents a curious and venerable specimen of the timber-and plaster style of building, in which some of the finest old houses in England are constructed; the front projects into porticos and vestibules, and rises into many gables, some in a row, and others crowning semi-detached portions of the structure;

the windows mostly open on hinges, but show a delightful irregularity of shape and position; a multiplicity of chimneys break through the roof at their own will, or, at least, without any settled purpose of the architect. The whole affair looks very old,—so old, indeed, that the front bulges forth, as if the timber framework were a little weary, at last, of standing erect so long; but the state of repair is so perfect, and there is such an indescribable aspect of continuous vitality within the system of this aged house, that you feel confident that there may be safe shelter yet, and perhaps for centuries to come, under its time-honoured roof. And on a bench, sluggishly enjoying the sunshine, and looking into the street of Warwick as from a life apart, a few old men are generally to be seen, wrapped in long cloaks, on which you may detect the glistening of a silver badge representing the Bear and Ragged Staff. These decorated worthies are some of the Twelve Brethren of Leicester's Hospital,—a community which subsists to-day under the identical modes that were established for it in the reign of Queen Elizabeth, and of course retains many features of a social life that has vanished almost everywhere else.

The edifice itself dates from a much older period than the charitable institution of which it is now the home. It was the seat of a religious fraternity far back in the Middle Ages, and continued so till Henry VIII. turned all the priesthood of England out-of-doors, and put the most unscrupulous of his favourites into their vacant abodes. In many instances, the old monks had chosen the sites of their domiciles so well, and built them on such a broad system of beauty and convenience, that their lay-occupants found it easy to convert them into stately and comfortable homes; and as such they still exist, with something of the antique reverence lingering about them. The structure now before us seems to have been first granted to Sir Nicholas Lestrange, who perhaps intended, like other men, to establish his household gods in the niches whence he had thrown down the images of saints, and to lay his hearth where an altar had stood. But there was probably a natural reluctance in those days (when Catholicism, so lately repudiated, must needs have retained an influence over all but the most obdurate characters) to bring one's hopes of domestic prosperity and a fortunate lineage into direct hostility with the awful claims

of the ancient religion. At all events, there is still a superstitious idea, betwixt a fantasy and a belief, that the possession of former church property has drawn a curse along with it, not only among the posterity of those to whom it was originally granted, but wherever it has subsequently been transferred, even if honestly bought and paid for. There are families, now inhabiting some of the beautiful old abbeys, who appear to indulge a species of pride in recording the strange deaths and ugly shapes of misfortune that have occurred among their predecessors, and may be supposed likely to dog their own pathway down the ages of futurity. Whether Sir Nicholas Lestrange, in the beef-eating days of old Harry and Elizabeth, was a nervous man, and subject to apprehensions of this kind, I cannot tell; but it is certain that he speedily rid himself of the spoils of the church, and that, within twenty years afterwards, the edifice became the property of the famous Dudley, Earl of Leicester, brother of the Earl of Warwick. He devoted the ancient religious precinct to a charitable use, endowing it with an ample revenue, and making it the perpetual home of twelve poor, honest, and war-broken soldiers, mostly his own

retainers, and natives either of Warwickshire or Gloucestershire. These veterans, or others wonderfully like them, still occupy their monkish dormitories and haunt the time-darkened corridors and galleries of the hospital, leading a life of old-fashioned comfort, wearing the old-fashioned cloaks, and burnishing the identical silver badges which the Earl of Leicester gave to the original twelve. He is said to have been a bad man in his day; but he has succeeded in prolonging one good deed into what was to him a distant future.

On the projecting story, over the arched entrance, there is the date, 1571, and several coats-of-arms, either the earl's or those of his kindred, and immediately above the doorway a stone sculpture of the Bear and Ragged Staff.

Passing through the arch, we find ourselves in a quadrangle, or enclosed court, such as always formed the central part of a great family residence in Queen Elizabeth's time, and earlier. There can hardly be a more perfect specimen of such an establishment than Leicester's Hospital. The quadrangle is a sort of sky-roofed hall, to which there is convenient access from all parts of the house. The four inner fronts, with their

high, steep roofs and sharp gables, look into it from antique windows, and through open corridors and galleries along the sides; and there seems to be a richer display of architectural devices and ornaments, quainter carvings in oak, and more fantastic shapes of the timber framework, than on the side toward the street. On the wall opposite the arched entrance are the following inscriptions, comprising such moral rules, I presume, as were deemed most essential for the daily observance of the community: "Honour all Men"—"Fear God"—"Honour the King"—"Love the Brotherhood;" and again, as if this latter injunction needed emphasis and repetition among a household of aged people soured with the hard fortune of their previous lives,—"Be kindly affectioned one to another." One sentence, over a door communicating with the Master's side of the house, is addressed to that dignitary,—"He that ruleth over men must be just." All these are charactered in old English letters, and form part of the elaborate ornamentation of the house. Everywhere—on the walls, over windows and doors, and at all points where there is room to place them—appear escutcheons

of arms, cognizances, and crests, emblazoned in their proper colours, and illuminating the ancient quadrangle with their splendour. One of these devices is a large image of a porcupine on an heraldic wreath, being the crest of the Lords de Lisle. But especially is the cognizance of the Bear and Ragged Staff repeated over and over, and over again and again, in a great variety of attitudes, at full-length and half-length, in paint and in oaken sculpture, in bas-relief and rounded image. The founder of the hospital was certainly disposed to reckon his own beneficence as among the hereditary glories of his race; and had he lived and died a half-century earlier, he would have kept up an old Catholic custom by enjoining the twelve bedesmen to pray for the welfare of his soul.

At my first visit, some of the brethren were seated on the bench outside of the edifice, looking down into the street; but they did not vouchsafe me a word, and seemed so estranged from modern life, so enveloped in antique customs and old-fashioned cloaks, that to converse with them would have been like shouting across the gulf between our age and Queen Elizabeth's. So I

passed into the quadrangle, and found it quite solitary, except that a plain and neat old woman happened to be crossing it, with an aspect of business and carefulness that bespoke her a woman of this world, and not merely a shadow of the past. Asking her if I could come in, she answered very readily and civilly that I might, and said that I was free to look about me, hinting a hope, however, that I would not open the private doors of the brotherhood, as some visitors were in the habit of doing. Under her guidance, I went into what was formerly the great hall of the establishment, where King James I. had once been feasted by an Earl of Warwick, as is commemorated by an inscription on the cobwebbed and dingy wall. It is a very spacious and barn-like apartment, with a brick floor, and a vaulted roof, the rafters of which are oaken beams, wonderfully carved, but hardly visible in the duskiness that broods aloft. The hall may have made a splendid appearance, when it was decorated with rich tapestry, and illuminated with chandeliers, cressets, and torches glistening upon silver dishes, where King James sat at supper among his brilliantly dressed nobles; but it has come to

base uses in these latter days,—being improved, in Yankee phrase, as a brewery and wash-room, and as a cellar for the brethren's separate allotments of coal.

The old lady here left me to myself, and I returned into the quadrangle. It was very quiet, very handsome, in its own obsolete style, and must be an exceedingly comfortable place for the old people to lounge in, when the inclement winds render it inexpedient to walk abroad. There are shrubs against the wall, on one side; and on another is a cloistered walk, adorned with stags' heads and antlers, and running beneath a covered gallery, up to which ascends a balustraded staircase. In the portion of the edifice opposite the entrance arch are the apartments of the Master; and looking into the window (as the old woman, at no request of mine, had specially informed me that I might), I saw a low, but vastly comfortable parlour, very handsomely furnished, and altogether a luxurious place. It had a fireplace with an immense arch, the antique breadth of which extended almost from wall to wall of the room, though now fitted up in such a way that the modern coal-grate looked very diminutive in the

midst. Gazing into this pleasant interior, it seemed to me, that, among these venerable surroundings, availing himself of whatever was good in former things, and eking out their imperfection with the results of modern ingenuity, the Master might lead a not unenviable life. On the cloistered side of the quadrangle, where the dark oak panels made the enclosed space dusky, I beheld a curtained window reddened by a great blaze from within, and heard the bubbling and squeaking of something—doubtless very nice and succulent—that was being cooked at the kitchen-fire. I think, indeed, that a whiff or two of the savoury fragrance reached my nostrils; at all events, the impression grew upon me that Leicester's Hospital is one of the jolliest old domiciles in England.

I was about to depart, when another old woman, very plainly dressed, but fat, comfortable, and with a cheerful twinkle in her eyes, came in through the arch, and looked curiously at me. This repeated apparition of the gentle sex (though by no means under its loveliest guise) had still an agreeable effect in modifying my ideas of an institution which I had supposed to be of a stern

and monastic character. She asked whether I wished to see the hospital, and said that the porter, whose office it was to attend to visitors, was dead, and would be buried that very day, so that the whole establishment could not conveniently be shown me. She kindly invited me, however, to visit the apartment occupied by her husband and herself; so I followed her up the antique staircase, along the gallery, and into a small, oak-panelled parlour, where sat an old man in a long blue garment, who arose and saluted me with much courtesy. He seemed a very quiet person, and yet had a look of travel and adventure, and gray experience, such as I could have fancied in a palmer of ancient times, who might, likewise, have worn a similar costume. The little room was carpeted and neatly furnished; a portrait of its occupant was hanging on the wall; and on a table were two swords crossed,—one, probably, his own battle-weapon, and the other, which I drew half out of the scabbard, had an inscription on the blade, purporting that it had been taken from the field of Waterloo. My kind old hostess was anxious to exhibit all the particulars of their housekeeping, and led me into the bedroom, which was in the nicest order, with a

snow-white quilt upon the bed; and in a little intervening room was a washing and bathing apparatus—a convenience (judging from the personal aspect and atmosphere of such parties) seldom to be met with in the humbler ranks of British life.

The old soldier and his wife both seemed glad of somebody to talk with; but the good woman availed herself of the privilege far more copiously than the veteran himself, insomuch that he felt it expedient to give her an occasional nudge with his elbow in her well-padded ribs. "Don't you be so talkative!" quoth he; and, indeed, he could hardly find space for a word, and quite as little after his admonition as before. Her nimble tongue ran over the whole system of life in the hospital. The brethren, she said, had a yearly stipend (the amount of which she did not mention), and such decent lodgings as I saw, and some other advantages, free; and, instead of being pestered with a great many rules, and made to dine together at a great table, they could manage their little household matters as they liked, buying their own dinners, and having them cooked in the general kitchen, and eating them snugly in their

own parlours. "And," added she, rightly deeming this the crowning privilege, "with the Master's permission, they can have their wives to take care of them; and no harm comes of it; and what more can an old man desire?" It was evident enough that the good dame found herself in what she considered very rich clover, and, moreover, had plenty of small occupations to keep her from getting rusty and dull; but the veteran impressed me as deriving far less enjoyment from the monotonous ease, without fear of change or hope of improvement, that had followed upon thirty years of peril and vicissitude. I fancied, too, that, while pleased with the novelty of a stranger's visit, he was still a little shy of becoming a spectacle for the stranger's curiosity: for, if he chose to be morbid about the matter, the establishment was but an almshouse, in spite of its old-fashioned magnificence, and his fine blue cloak only a pauper's garment, with a silver badge on it that, perhaps, galled his shoulder. In truth, the badge and the peculiar garb, though quite in accordance with the manners of the Earl of Leicester's age, are repugnant to modern prejudices, and might fitly and humanely be abolished.

A year or two afterwards I paid another visit to the hospital, and found a new porter established in office, and already capable of talking like a guide-book about the history, antiquities, and present condition of the charity. He informed me that the twelve brethren are selected from among old soldiers of good character, whose other resources must not exceed an income of five pounds; thus excluding all commissioned officers, whose half-pay would of course be more than that amount. They receive from the hospital an annuity of eighty pounds each, besides their apartments, a garment of fine blue cloth, an annual abundance of ale, and a privilege at the kitchen-fire; so that, considering the class from which they are taken, they may well reckon themselves among the fortunate of the earth. Furthermore, they are invested with political rights, acquiring a vote for member of Parliament in virtue either of their income or brotherhood. On the other hand, as regards their personal freedom or conduct, they are subject to a supervision which the master of the hospital might render extremely annoying, were he so inclined; but the military restraint under which they have spent the active portion of their lives

makes it easier for them to endure the domestic discipline here imposed upon their age. The porter bore his testimony (whatever were its value) to their being as contented and happy as such a set of old people could possibly be, and affirmed that they spent much time in burnishing their silver badges, and were as proud of them as a nobleman of his star. These badges, by-the-by, except one that was stolen and replaced in Queen Anne's time, are the very same that decorated the original twelve brethren.

I have seldom met with a better guide than my friend the porter. He appeared to take a genuine interest in the peculiarities of the establishment, and yet had an existence apart from them, so that he could the better estimate what those peculiarities were. To be sure, his knowledge and observation were confined to external things, but, so far, had a sufficiently extensive scope. He led me up the staircase and exhibited portions of the timber framework of the edifice that are reckoned to be eight or nine hundred years old, and are still neither worm-eaten nor decayed; and traced out what had been a great hall, in the days of the Catholic fraternity, though its area is now filled up

with the apartments of the twelve brethren; and pointed to ornaments of sculptured oak, done in an ancient religious style of art, but hardly visible amid the vaulted dimness of the roof. Thence we went to the chapel—the Gothic church which I noted several pages back—surmounting the gateway that stretches half across the street. Here the brethren attend daily prayer, and have each a prayer-book of the finest paper, with a fair, large type for their old eyes. The interior of the chapel is very plain, with a picture of no merit for an altar-piece, and a single old pane of painted glass in the great eastern window, representing—no saint, nor angel, as is customary in such cases—but that grim sinner the Earl of Leicester. Nevertheless, amid so many tangible proofs of his human sympathy, one comes to doubt whether the earl could have been such a hardened reprobate, after all.

We ascended the tower of the chapel, and looked down between its battlements into the street, a hundred feet below us; while clambering half-way up were fox-glove flowers, weeds, small shrubs, and tufts of grass, that had rooted themselves into the roughnesses of the stone foundation.

Far around us lay a rich and lovely English landscape, with many a church spire and noble country seat, and several objects of high historic interest. Edge Hill, where the Puritans defeated Charles I., is in sight on the edge of the horizon, and much nearer stands the house where Cromwell lodged on the night before the battle. Right under our eyes, and half enveloping the town with its high-shouldering wall, so that all the closely compacted streets seemed but a precinct of the estate, was the Earl of Warwick's delightful park, a wide extent of sunny lawns, interspersed with broad contiguities of forest shade. Some of the cedars of Lebanon were there,—a growth of trees in which the Warwick family take an hereditary pride. The two highest towers of the castle heave themselves up out of a mass of foliage, and look down in a lordly manner upon the plebeian roofs of the town, a part of which are slate-covered (these are the modern houses), and a part are coated with old red tiles, denoting the more ancient edifices. A hundred and sixty or seventy years ago, a great fire destroyed a considerable portion of the town, and doubtless annihilated many structures of a remote antiquity; at least, there was a possibility

of very old houses in the long past of Warwick, which King Cymbeline is said to have founded in the year ONE of the Christian era!

And this historic fact or poetic fiction, whichever it may be, brings to mind a more indestructible reality than anything else that has occurred within the present field of our vision; though this includes the scene of Guy of Warwick's legendary exploits, and some of those of the Round Table, to say nothing of the battle of Edge Hill. For perhaps it was in the landscape now under our eyes that Posthumus wandered with the king's daughter, the sweet, chaste, faithful, and courageous Imogen, the tenderest and womanliest woman that Shakspeare ever made immortal in the world. The silver Avon, which we see flowing so quietly by the gray castle, may have held their images in its bosom.

The day, though it began brightly, had long been overcast, and the clouds now spat down a few spiteful drops upon us, besides that the east wind was very chill; so we descended the winding tower stair, and went next into the garden, one side of which is shut in by almost the only remaining portion of the old city wall. A part of the

garden ground is devoted to grass and shrubbery, and permeated by gravel walks, in the centre of one of which is a beautiful stone vase of Egyptian sculpture, that formerly stood on the top of a Nilometer, or graduated pillar for measuring the rise and fall of the river Nile. On the pedestal is a Latin inscription by Dr. Parr, who (his vicarage of Hatton being so close at hand) was probably often the master's guest, and smoked his interminable pipe along these garden walks. Of the vegetable garden, which lies adjacent, the lion's share is appropriated to the master, and twelve small, separate patches to the individual brethren, who cultivate them at their own judgment and by their own labour; and their beans and cauliflowers have a better flavour, I doubt not, than if they had received them directly from the dead hand of the Earl of Leicester, like the rest of their food. In the farther part of the garden is an arbour for the old men's pleasure and convenience, and I should like well to sit down among them there, and find out what is really the bitter and the sweet of such a sort of life. As for the old gentlemen themselves, they put me queerly in mind of the Salem Custom House, and the vene-

rable personages whom I found so quietly at anchor there.

The master's residence, forming one entire side of the quadrangle, fronts on the garden, and wears an aspect at once stately and homely. It can hardly have undergone any perceptible change within three centuries; but the garden, into which its old windows look, has probably put off a great many eccentricities and quaintnesses, in the way of cunningly clipped shrubbery, since the gardener of Queen Elizabeth's reign threw down his rusty shears and took his departure. The present master's name is Harris; he is a descendant of the founder's family, a gentleman of independent fortune, and a clergyman of the Established Church, as the regulations of the hospital require him to be. I know not what are his official emoluments; but, according to all English precedent, an ancient charitable fund is certain to be held directly for the behoof of those who administer it, and perhaps incidentally, in a moderate way, for the nominal beneficiaries; and, in the case before us, the twelve brethren being so comfortably provided for, the master is likely to be at least as comfortable as all the twelve together. Yet I

ought not, even in a distant land, to fling an idle gibe against a gentleman of whom I really know nothing, except that the people under his charge bear all possible tokens of being tended and cared for as sedulously as if each of them sat by a warm fireside of his own, with a daughter bustling round the hearth to make ready his porridge and his titbits. It is delightful to think of the good life which a suitable man, in the master's position, has an opportunity to lead,—linked to time-honoured customs, welded in with an ancient system, never dreaming of radical change, and bringing all the mellowness and richness of the past down into these railway days, which do not compel him or his community to move a whit quicker than of yore. Everybody can appreciate the advantages of going ahead; it might be well, sometimes, to think whether there is not a word or two to be said in favour of standing still, or going to sleep.

From the garden we went into the kitchen, where the fire was burning hospitably, and diffused a genial warmth far and wide, together with the fragrance of some old English roast-beef, which, I think, must at that moment have been

done nearly to a turn. The kitchen is a lofty, spacious, and noble room, partitioned off round the fire-place, by a sort of semicircular oaken screen, or rather, an arrangement of heavy and high-backed settles, with an ever open entrance between them, on either side of which is the omnipresent image of the Bear and Ragged Staff, three feet high, and excellently carved in oak, now black with time and unctuous kitchen-smoke. The ponderous mantelpiece, likewise of carved oak, towers high towards the dusky ceiling, and extends its mighty breadth to take in a vast area of hearth, the arch of the fire-place being positively so immense that I could compare it to nothing but the city gateway. Above its cavernous opening were crossed two ancient halberds, the weapons, possibly, of soldiers who had fought under Leicester in the Low Countries; and elsewhere on the walls were displayed several muskets, which some of the present inmates of the hospital may have levelled against the French. Another ornament of the mantelpiece was a square of silken needle-work or embroidery, faded nearly white, but dimly representing that wearisome Bear and Ragged Staff, which we should hardly look twice

at, only that it was wrought by the fair fingers of poor Amy Robsart, and beautifully framed in oak from Kenilworth Castle, at the expense of a Mr. Conner, a countryman of our own. Certainly, no Englishman would be capable of this little bit of enthusiasm. Finally, the kitchen firelight glistens on a splendid display of copper flagons, all of generous capacity, and one of them about as big as a half-barrel; the smaller vessels contain the customary allowance of ale, and the larger one is filled with that foaming liquor on four festive occasions of the year, and emptied amain by the jolly brotherhood. I should be glad to see them do it; but it would be an exploit fitter for Queen Elizabeth's age than these degenerate times.

The kitchen is the social hall of the twelve brethren. In the daytime, they bring their little messes to be cooked here, and eat them in their own parlours; but after a certain hour, the great hearth is cleared and swept, and the old men assemble round its blaze, each with his tankard and his pipe, and hold high converse through the evening. If the master be a fit man for his office, methinks he will sometimes sit down sociably among them; for there is an elbow-chair by the

fireside which it would not demean his dignity to fill, since it was occupied by King James at the great festival of nearly three centuries ago. A sip of the ale and a whiff of the tobacco-pipe would put him in friendly relations with his venerable household; and then we can fancy him instructing them by pithy apothegms and religious texts which were first uttered here by some Catholic priest and have impregnated the atmosphere ever since. If a joke goes round, it shall be of an elder coinage than Joe Miller's, as old as Lord Bacon's collection, or as the jest-book that Master Slender asked for when he lacked small-talk for sweet Anne Page. No news shall be spoken of later than the drifting ashore, on the northern coast, of some stern-post or figure-head, a barnacled fragment of one of the great galleons of the Spanish Armada. What a tremour would pass through the antique group, if a damp newspaper should suddenly be spread to dry before the fire! They would feel as if either that printed sheet or they themselves must be an unreality. What a mysterious awe, if the shriek of the railway-train, as it reaches the Warwick Station, should ever so faintly invade their ears! Movement of any

kind seems inconsistent with the stability of such an institution. Nevertheless, I trust that the ages will carry it along with them; because it is such a pleasant kind of dream for an American to find his way thither, and behold a piece of the sixteenth century set into our prosaic times, and then to depart, and think of its arched doorway as a spell-guarded entrance which will never be accessible or visible to him any more.

Not far from the market-place of Warwick stands the great church of St. Mary's: a vast edifice, indeed, and almost worthy to be a cathedral. People who pretend to skill in such matters say that it is in a poor style of architecture, though designed (or, at least, extensively restored) by Sir Christopher Wren; but I thought it very striking, with its wide, high, and elaborate windows, its tall towers, its immense length, and (for it was long before I outgrew this Americanism, the love of an old thing merely for the sake of its age) the tinge of gray antiquity over the whole. Once, while I stood gazing up at the tower, the clock struck twelve with a very deep intonation, and immediately some chimes began to play, and kept up their resounding music for

five minutes, as measured by the hand upon the dial. It was a very delightful harmony, as airy as the notes of birds, and seemed a not unbecoming freak of half-sportive fancy in the huge, ancient, and solemn church; although I have seen an old-fashioned parlour-clock that did precisely the same thing, in its small way.

The great attraction of this edifice is the Beauchamp (or, as the English, who delight in vulgarizing their fine old Norman names, call it, the Beechum) Chapel, where the Earls of Warwick and their kindred have been buried, from four hundred years back till within a recent period. It is a stately and very elaborate chapel, with a large window of ancient painted glass, as perfectly preserved as any that I remember seeing in England, and remarkably vivid in its colours. Here are several monuments with marble figures recumbent upon them, representing the earls in their knightly armour, and their dames in the ruffs and court finery of their day, looking hardly stiffer in stone than they must needs have been in their starched linen and embroidery. The renowned Earl of Leicester of Queen Elizabeth's time, the benefactor of the hospital, reclines at

full length on the tablet of one of these tombs, side by side with his Countess,—not Amy Robsart, but a lady who (unless I have confused the story with some other mouldy scandal) is said to have avenged poor Amy's murder by poisoning the earl himself. Be that as it may, both figures, and especially the earl, look like the very types of ancient Honour and Conjugal Faith. In consideration of his long-enduring kindness to the twelve brethren, I cannot consent to believe him as wicked as he is usually depicted; and it seems a marvel, now that so many well-established historical verdicts have been reversed, why some enterprising writer does not make out Leicester to have been the pattern nobleman of his age.

In the centre of the chapel is the magnificent memorial of its founder, Richard Beauchamp, Earl of Warwick in the time of Henry VI. On a richly ornamented altar-tomb of gray marble lies the bronze figure of a knight in gilded armour, most admirably executed: for the sculptors of those days had wonderful skill in their own style, and could make so lifelike an image of a warrior, in brass or marble, that, if a trumpet were sounded over his tomb, you would expect him to start

up and handle his sword. The earl whom we now speak of, however, has slept soundly in spite of a more serious disturbance than any blast of a trumpet, unless it were the final one. Some centuries after his death, the floor of the chapel fell down and broke open the stone coffin in which he was buried; and among the fragments appeared the anciently entombed Earl of Warwick, with the colour scarcely faded out of his cheeks, his eyes a little sunken, but in other respects looking as natural as if he had died yesterday. But exposure to the atmosphere appeared to begin and finish the long-delayed process of decay in a moment, causing him to vanish like a bubble; so that, almost before there had been time to wonder at him, there was nothing left of the stalwart earl save his hair. This sole relic the ladies of Warwick made prize of, and braided it into rings and brooches for their own adornment; and thus, with a chapel and a ponderous tomb built on purpose to protect his remains, this great nobleman could not help being brought untimely to the light of day, nor even keep his lovelocks on his skull after he had so long done with love. There seems to be a fatality

that disturbs people in their sepulchres, when they have been over-careful to render them magnificent and impregnable,—as witness the builders of the Pyramids, and Hadrian, Augustus, and the Scipios, and most other personages whose mausoleums have been conspicuous enough to attract the violator; and as for dead men's hair, I have seen a lock of King Edward the Fourth's, of a reddish-brown colour, which perhaps was once twisted round the delicate forefinger of Mistress Shore.

The direct lineage of the renowned characters that lie buried in this splendid chapel has long been extinct. The earldom is now held by the Grevilles, descendants of the Lord Brooke who was slain in the Parliamentary War; and they have recently (that is to say, within a century) built a burial-vault on the other side of the church, calculated (as the sexton assured me, with a nod as if he were pleased) to afford suitable and respectful accommodation to as many as fourscore coffins. Thank Heaven, the old man did not call them "CASKETS!"—a vile modern phrase, which compels a person of sense and good taste to shrink more disgustfully than ever before

from the idea of being buried at all. But as regards those eighty coffins, only sixteen have as yet been contributed; and it may be a question with some minds, not merely whether the Grevilles will hold the earldom of Warwick until the full number shall be made up, but whether earldoms and all manner of lordships will not have faded out of England long before those many generations shall have passed from the castle to the vault. I hope not. A titled and landed aristocracy, if anywise an evil and an incumbrance, is so only to the nation which is doomed to bear it on its shoulders; and an American, whose sole relation to it is to admire its picturesque effect upon society, ought to be the last man to quarrel with what affords him so much gratuitous enjoyment. Nevertheless, conservative as England is, and though I scarce ever found an Englishman who seemed really to desire change, there was continually a dull sound in my ears as if the old foundations of things were crumbling away. Some time or other,—by no irreverent effort of violence, but, rather, in spite of all pious efforts to uphold a heterogeneous pile of institutions that will have outlasted their vitality,—at some

unexpected moment, there must come a terrible crash. The sole reason why I should desire it to happen in my day is, that I might be there to see! But the ruin of my own country is, perhaps, all that I am destined to witness; and that immense catastrophe (though I am strong in the faith that there is a national lifetime of a thousand years in us yet) would serve any man well enough as his final spectacle on earth.

If the visitor is inclined to carry away any little memorial of Warwick he had better go to an Old Curiosity Shop in the High Street, where there is a vast quantity of obsolete gewgaws, great and small, and many of them so pretty and ingenious that you wonder how they came to be thrown aside and forgotten. As regards its minor tastes, the world changes, but does not improve; it appears to me, indeed, that there have been epochs of far more exquisite fancy than the present one, in matters of personal ornament, and such delicate trifles as we put upon a drawing-room table, a mantelpiece, or a whatnot. The shop in question is near the East Gate, but is hardly to be found without careful search, being denoted only by the name of "REDFERN," painted not very conspi-

cuously in the top-light of the door. Immediately on entering, we find ourselves among a confusion of old rubbish and valuables, ancient armour, historic portraits, ebony cabinets inlaid with pearl, tall, ghostly clocks, hideous old china, dim looking-glasses in frames of tarnished magnificence,—a thousand objects of strange aspect, and others that almost frighten you by their likeness in unlikeness to things now in use. It is impossible to give an idea of the variety of articles, so thickly strewn about that we can scarcely move without overthrowing some great curiosity with a crash, or sweeping away some small one hitched to our sleeves. Three stories of the entire house are crowded in like manner. The collection, even as we see it exposed to view, must have been got together at great cost; but the real treasures of the establishment lie in secret repositories, whence they are not likely to be drawn forth at an ordinary summons; though, if a gentleman with a competently long purse should call for them, I doubt not that the signet-ring of Joseph's friend Pharaoh, or the Duke of Alva's leading-staff, or the dagger that killed the Duke of Buckingham (all of which I have seen), or any other almost

incredible thing, might make its appearance. Gold snuff-boxes, antique gems, jewelled goblets, Venetian wine-glasses (which burst when poison is poured into them, and therefore must not be used for modern wine-drinking), jasper-handled knives, painted Sévres tea-cups,—in short, there are all sorts of things that a virtuoso ransacks the world to discover.

It would be easier to spend a hundred pounds in Mr. Redfern's shop than to keep the money in one's pocket; but, for my part, I contented myself with buying a little old spoon of silver-gilt, and fantastically shaped, and got it at all the more reasonable rate because there happened to be no legend attached to it. I could supply any deficiency of that kind at much less expense than regilding the spoon!

RECOLLECTIONS OF A GIFTED WOMAN.

From Leamington to Stratford-on-Avon the distance is eight or nine miles, over a road that seemed to me most beautiful. Not that I can recall any memorable peculiarities; for the country, most of the way, is a succession of the gentlest swells and subsidences, affording wide and far glimpses of champaign scenery here and there, and sinking almost to a dead level as we draw near Stratford. Any landscape in New England, even the tamest, has a more striking outline, and besides would have its blue eyes open in those lakelets that we encounter almost from mile to mile at home, but of which the Old Country is utterly destitute; or it would smile in our faces through the medium of the wayside brooks that vanish under a low stone arch on one side of the road, and sparkle out again on the other. Neither of

these pretty features is often to be found in an English scene. The charm of the latter consists in the rich verdure of the fields, in the stately wayside trees and carefully kept plantations of wood, and in the old and high cultivation that has humanized the very sods by mingling so much of man's toil and care among them. To an American there is a kind of sanctity even in an English turnip-field, when he thinks how long that small square of ground has been known and recognized as a possession, transmitted from father to son, trodden often by memorable feet, and utterly redeemed from savagery by old acquaintanceship with civilized eyes. The wildest things in England are more than half tame. The trees, for instance, whether in hedge-row, park, or what they call forest, have nothing wild about them. They are never ragged; there is a certain decorous restraint in the freest outspread of their branches, though they spread wider than any self-nurturing tree; they are tall, vigorous, bulky, with a look of age-long life, and a promise of more years to come, all of which will bring them into closer kindred with the race of man. Somebody or other has known them from the sapling upward; and if they endure

long enough, they grow to be traditionally observed and honoured, and connected with the fortunes of old families, till, like Tennyson's Talking Oak, they babble with a thousand leafy tongues to ears that can understand them.

'An American tree, however, if it could grow in fair competition with an English one of similar species, would probably be the more picturesque object of the two. The Warwickshire elm has not so beautiful a shape as those that overhang our village street; and as for the redoubtable English oak, there is a certain John Bullism in its figure, a compact rotundity of foliage, a lack of irregular and various outline, that make it look wonderfully like a gigantic cauliflower. Its leaf, too, is much smaller than that of most varieties of American oak; nor do I mean to doubt that the latter, with free leave to grow, reverent care and cultivation, and immunity from the axe, would live out its centuries as sturdily as its English brother, and prove far the nobler and more majestic specimen of a tree at the end of them. Still, however one's Yankee patriotism may struggle against the admission, it must be owned that the trees and other objects of an English landscape take hold of

the observer by numberless minute tendrils, as it were, which, look as closely as we choose, we never find in an American scene. The parasitic growth is so luxuriant, that the trunk of the tree, so gray and dry in our climate, is better worth observing than the boughs and foliage; a verdant mossiness coats it all over; so that it looks almost as green as the leaves; and often, moreover, the stately stem is clustered about, high upward, with creeping and twining shrubs, the ivy, and sometimes the mistletoe, close-clinging friends, nurtured by the moisture and never too fervid sunshine, and supporting themselves by the old tree's abundant strength. We call it a parasitical vegetation; but, if the phrase imply any reproach, it is unkind to bestow it on this beautiful affection and relationship which exist in England between one order of plants and another: the strong tree being always ready to give support to the trailing shrub, lift it to the sun, and feed it out of its own heart, if it crave such food; and the shrub, on its part, repaying its foster-father with an ample luxuriance of beauty, and adding Corinthian grace to the tree's lofty strength. No bitter winter nips these tender little sympathies, no hot sun burns the life out

of them; and, therefore, they outlast the longevity of the oak, and, if the woodman permitted, would bury it in a green grave, when all is over.

Should there be nothing else along the road to look at, an English hedge might well suffice to occupy the eyes, and, to a depth beyond what he would suppose, the heart of an American. We often set out hedges in our own soil, but might as well set out figs or pine-apples and expect to gather fruit of them. Something grows, to be sure, which we choose to call a hedge; but it lacks the dense, luxuriant variety of vegetation that is accumulated into the English original, in which a botanist would find a thousand shrubs and gracious herbs that the hedge-maker never thought of planting there. Among them, growing wild, are many of the kindred blossoms of the very flowers which our pilgrim fathers brought from England, for the sake of their simple beauty and home-like associations, and which we have ever since been cultivating in gardens. There is not a softer trait to be found in the character of those stern men than that they should have been sensible of these flower-roots clinging among the fibres of their rugged hearts, and have felt the necessity of

bringing them over sea and making them heriditary in the new land, instead of trusting to what rarer beauty the wilderness might have in store for them.

Or, if the roadside has no hedge, the ugliest stone fence (such as, in America, would keep itself bare and unsympathizing till the end of time) is sure to be covered with the small handiwork of Nature; that careful mother lets nothing go naked there, and, if she cannot provide clothing, gives at least embroidery. No sooner is the fence built than she adopts and adorns it as a part of her original plan, treating the hard, uncomely construction as if it had all along been a favourite idea of her own. A little sprig of ivy may be seen creeping up the side of the low wall and clinging fast with its many feet to the rough surface; a tuft of grass roots itself between two of the stones, where a pinch or two of wayside dust has been moistened into nutritious soil for it; a small bunch of fern grows in another crevice; a deep, soft, verdant moss spreads itself along the top and over all the available inequalities of the fence; and where nothing else will grow, lichens stick tenaciously to the bare stones and variegate

the monotonous gray with hues of yellow and red. Finally, a great deal of shrubbery clusters along the base of the stone wall, and takes away the hardness of its outline; and in due time, as the upshot of these apparently aimless or sportive touches, we recognize that the beneficent Creator of all things, working through His handmaiden, whom we call Nature, has deigned to mingle a charm of divine gracefulness even with so earthly an institution as a boundary fence. The clown who wrought at it little dreamed what fellow-labourer he had.

The English should send us photographs of portions of the trunks of trees, the tangled and various products of a hedge, and a square foot of an old wall. They can hardly send anything else so characteristic. Their artists, especially of the later school, sometimes toil to depict such subjects, but are apt to stiffen the lithe tendrils in the process. The poets succeed better, with Tennyson at their head, and often produce ravishing effects by dint of a tender minuteness of touch, to which the genius of the soil and climate artfully impels them: for, as regards grandeur, there are loftier scenes in many countries than the best that England can

show; but, for the picturesqueness of the smallest object that lies under its gentle gloom and sunshine, there is no scenery like it anywhere.

In the foregoing paragraphs I have strayed away to a long distance from the road to Stratford-on-Avon; for I remember no such stone fences as I have been speaking of in Warwickshire, nor elsewhere in England, except among the Lakes, or in Yorkshire, and the rough and hilly countries to the north of it. Hedges there were along my road, however, and broad, level fields, rustic hamlets and cottages of ancient date,—from the roof of one of which the occupant was tearing away the thatch, and showing what an accumulation of dust, dirt, mouldiness, roots of weeds, families of mice, swallows' nests, and hordes of insects, had been deposited there since that old straw was new. Estimating its antiquity from these tokens, Shakspeare himself, in one of his morning rambles out of his native town, might have seen the thatch laid on; at all events, the cottage-walls were old enough to have known him as a guest. A few modern villas were also to be seen, and perhaps there were mansions of old gentility at no great distance, but hidden among trees; for

it is a point of English pride that such houses seldom allow themselves to be visible from the high-road. In short, I recollect nothing specially remarkable along the way, nor in the immediate approach to Stratford; and yet the picture of that June morning has a glory in my memory, owing chiefly, I believe, to the charm of the English summer-weather, the really good days of which are the most delightful that mortal man can ever hope to be favoured with. Such a genial warmth! A little too warm, it might be, yet only to such a degree as to assure an American (a certainty to which he seldom attains till attempered to the customary austerity of an English summer-day) that he was quite warm enough. And, after all, there was an unconquerable freshness in the atmosphere, which every little movement of a breeze shook over me like a dash of the ocean-spray. Such days need bring us no other happiness than their own light and temperature. No doubt, I could not have enjoyed it so exquisitely, except that there must be still latent in us Western wanderers (even after an absence of two centuries and more), an adaptation to the English climate which makes us sensible of a motherly kindness

in its scantiest sunshine, and overflows us with delight at its more lavish smiles.

The spire of Shakspeare's church—the Church of the Holy Trinity—begins to show itself among the trees at a little distance from Stratford. Next we see the shabby old dwellings, intermixed with mean-looking houses of modern date; and the streets being quite level, you are struck and surprised by nothing so much as the tameness of the general scene; as if Shakspeare's genius were vivid enough to have wrought pictorial splendours in the town where he was born. Here and there, however, a queer edifice meets your eye, endowed with the individuality that belongs only to the domestic architecture of times gone by; the house seems to have grown out of some odd quality in its inhabitant, as a sea-shell is moulded from within by the character of its inmate; and having been built in a strange fashion, generations ago, it has ever since been growing stranger and quainter, as old humourists are apt to do. Here, too (as so often impressed me in decayed English towns), there appeared to be a greater abundance of aged people wearing small-clothes and leaning on sticks than you could assemble on our side of

the water by sounding a trumpet and proclaiming a reward for the most venerable. I tried to account for this phenomenon by several theories: as, for example, that our new towns are unwholesome for age and kill it off unseasonably; or that our old men have a subtle sense of fitness, and die of their own accord rather than live in an unseemly contrast with youth and novelty: but the secret may be, after all, that hair-dyes, false teeth, modern arts of dress, and other contrivances of a skin-deep youthfulness, have not crept into these antiquated English towns, and so people grow old without the weary necessity of seeming younger than they are.

After wandering through two or three streets, I found my way to Shakspeare's birthplace, which is almost a smaller and humbler house than any description can prepare the visitor to expect; so inevitably does an august inhabitant make his abode palatial to our imaginations, receiving his guests, indeed, in a castle in the air, until we unwisely insist on meeting him among the sordid lanes and alleys of lower earth. The portion of the edifice with which Shakspeare had anything to do is hardly large enough, in the basement,

to contain the butcher's stall that one of his descendants kept, and that still remains there, windowless, with the cleaver-cuts in its hacked counter, which projects into the street under a little penthouse roof, as if waiting for a new occupant.

The upper half of the door was open, and, on my rapping at it, a young person in black made her appearance and admitted me: she was not a menial, but remarkably genteel (an American characteristic) for an English girl, and was probably the daughter of the old gentlewoman who takes care of the house. This lower room has a pavement of gray slabs of stone, which may have been rudely squared when the house was new, but are now all cracked, broken, and disarranged in a most unaccountable way. One does not see how any ordinary usage, for whatever length of time, should have so smashed these heavy stones; it is as if an earthquake had burst up through the floor, which afterwards had been imperfectly trodden down again. The room is whitewashed and very clean, but woefully shabby and dingy, coarsely built, and such as the most poetical imagination would find it diffi-

cult to idealize. In the rear of this apartment is the kitchen, a still smaller room, of a similar rude aspect; it has a great, rough fireplace, with space for a large family under the blackened opening of the chimney, and an immense passage-way for the smoke, through which Shakspeare may have seen the blue sky by day and the stars glimmering down at him by night. It is now a dreary spot where the long-extinguished embers used to be. A glowing fire, even if it covered only a quarter part of the hearth, might still do much towards making the old kitchen cheerful. But we get a depressing idea of the stifled, poor, sombre kind of life that could have been lived in such a dwelling, where this room seems to have been the gathering-place of the family, with no breath or scope, no good retirement, but old and young, huddling together cheek by jowl. What a hardy plant was Shakspeare's genius, how fatal its development, since it could not be blighted in such an atmosphere! It only brought human nature the closer to him, and put more unctuous earth about his roots.

Thence I was ushered up-stairs to the room in which Shakspeare is supposed to have been

n; though, if you peep too curiously into the tter, you may find the shadow of an ugly ubt on this, as well as most other points of s mysterious life. It is the chamber over the tcher's shop, and is lighted by one broad win-w containing a great many small, irregular nes of glass. The floor is made of planks, ry rudely hewn, and fitting together with little atness; the naked beams and rafters, at the les of the room and overhead, bear the original arks of the builder's broad axe, with no evi-nce of an attempt to smooth off the job. Again e have to reconcile ourselves to the smallness the space enclosed by these illustrious walls, a circumstance more difficult to accept, as re-ards places that we have heard, read, thought, id dreamed much about, than any other dis-chanting particular of a mistaken ideal. A w paces—perhaps seven or eight—take us from id to end of it. So low it is, that I could sily touch the ceiling, and might have done so ithout a tiptoe stretch, had it been a good deal igher; and this humility of the chamber has mpted a vast multitude of people to write their ames overhead in pencil. Every inch of the

side walls, even into the obscurest nooks and corners, is covered with a similar record; all the window-panes, moreover, are scrawled with diamond signatures, among which is said to be that of Walter Scott; but so many persons have sought to immortalize themselves in close vicinity to his name that I really could not trace him out. Methinks it is strange that people do not strive to forget their forlorn little identities in such situations, instead of thrusting them forward into the dazzle of a great renown, where, if noticed, they cannot but be deemed impertinent.

This room, and the entire house, so far as I saw it, are whitewashed and exceedingly clean; nor is there the aged, musty smell with which old Chester first made me acquainted, and which goes far to cure an American of his excessive predilection for antique residences. An old lady, who took charge of me up-stairs, had the manners and aspect of a gentlewoman, and talked with somewhat formidable knowledge and appreciative intelligence about Shakspeare. Arranged on a table and in chairs were various prints, views of houses and scenes connected with Shakspeare's memory, together with editions of his works and

local publications about his home and haunts, from the sale of which this respectable lady perhaps realizes a handsome profit. At any rate, I bought a good many of them, conceiving that it might be the civilest way of requiting her for her instructive conversation and the trouble she took in showing me the house. It cost me a pang (not a curmudgeonly, but a gentlemanly one) to offer a downright fee to the lady-like girl who had admitted me; but I swallowed my delicate scruples with some little difficulty, and she digested hers, so far as I could observe, with no difficulty at all. In fact, nobody need fear to hold out half a crown to any person with whom he has occasion to speak a word in England.

I should consider it unfair to quit Shakspeare's house without the frank acknowledgment that I was conscious of not the slightest emotion while viewing it, nor any quickening of the imagination. This has often happened to me in my visits to memorable places. Whatever pretty and apposite reflections I may have made upon the subject had either occurred to me before I ever saw Stratford, or have been elaborated since. It is pleasant, nevertheless, to think that I have

seen the place; and I believe that I can form a more sensible and vivid idea of Shakspeare as a flesh-and-blood individual now that I have stood on the kitchen-hearth and in the birth-chamber; but I am not quite certain that this power of realization is altogether desirable in reference to a great poet. The Shakspeare whom I met there took various guises, but had not his laurel on. He was successively the roguish boy,—the youthful deer-stealer,—the comrade of players,—the too familiar friend of Davenant's mother,—the careful, thrifty, thriven man of property who came back from London to lend money on bond, and occupy the best house in Stratford,—the mellow, red-nosed, autumnal boon-companion of John a' Combe—and finally (or else the Stratford gossips belied him), the victim of convivial habits who met his death by tumbling into a ditch on his way home from a drinking bout, and left his second-best bed to his poor wife.

I feel, as sensibly as the reader can, what horrible impiety it is to remember these things, be they true or false. In either case, they ought to vanish out of sight on the distant ocean-line of the past, leaving a pure, white memory, even as a sail,

though perhaps darkened with many stains, looks snowy white on the far horizon. But I draw a moral from these unworthy reminiscences and this embodiment of the poet, as suggested by some of the grimy actualities of his life. It is for the high interests of the world not to insist upon finding out that its greatest men are, in a certain lower sense, very much the same kind of men as the rest of us, and often a little worse; because a common mind cannot properly digest such a discovery, nor ever know the true proportion of the great man's good and evil, nor how small a part of him it was that touched our muddy or dusty earth. Thence comes moral bewilderment, and even intellectual loss, in regard to what is best of him. When Shakspeare invoked a curse on the man who should stir his bones, he perhaps meant the larger share of it for him or them who should pry into his perishing earthliness, the defects or even the merits of the character that he wore in Stratford, when he had left mankind so much to muse upon that was imperishable and divine. Heaven keep me from incurring any part of the anathema in requital for the irreverent sentences above written!

From Shakspeare's house, the next step, of course, is to visit his burial-place. The appearance of the church is most venerable and beautiful, standing amid a great green shadow of lime-trees, above which rises the spire, while the Gothic battlements and buttresses and vast arched windows are obscurely seen through the boughs. The Avon loiters past the churchyard, an exceedingly sluggish river, which might seem to have been considering which way it should flow ever since Shakspeare left off paddling in it and gathering the large forget-me-nots that grow among its flags and water-weeds.

An old man in small-clothes was waiting at the gate; and, inquiring whether I wished to go in, he preceded me to the church-porch, and rapped. I could have done it quite as effectually for myself; but, it seems, the old people of the neighbourhood haunt about the churchyard, in spite of the frowns and remonstrances of the sexton, who grudges them the half-eleemosynary sixpence which they sometimes get from visitors. I was admitted into the church by a respectable-looking and intelligent man in black, the parish-clerk, I suppose, and probably holding a richer incumbency than his vicar,

if all the fees which he handles remain in his own pocket. He was already exhibiting the Shakspeare monuments to two or three visitors, and several other parties came in while I was there.

The poet and his family are in possession of what may be considered the very best burial-places that the church affords. They lie in a row, right across the breadth of the chancel, the foot of each gravestone being close to the elevated floor on which the altar stands. Nearest to the side-wall, beneath Shakspeare's bust, is a slab bearing a Latin inscription addressed to his wife, and covering her remains; then his own slab, with the old anathematizing stanza upon it; then that of Thomas Nash, who married his granddaughter; then that of Dr. Hall, the husband of his daughter Susannah; and, lastly, Susannah's own. Shakspeare's is the commonest-looking slab of all, being just such a flag-stone as Essex Street in Salem used to be paved with, when I was a boy. Moreover, unless my eyes or recollection deceive me, there is a crack across it, as if it had already undergone some such violence as the inscription deprecates. Unlike the other monuments of the family, it bears no name, nor am I acquainted with

the grounds or authority on which it is absolutely determined to be Shakspeare's; although, being in a range with those of his wife and children, it might naturally be attributed to him. But, then, why does his wife, who died afterwards, take precedence of him and occupy the place next his bust? And where are the graves of another daughter and a son, who have a better right in the family row than Thomas Nash, his grandson-in-law? Might not one or both of them have been laid under the nameless stone? But it is dangerous trifling with Shakspeare's dust; so I forbear to meddle further with the grave (though the prohibition makes it tempting), and shall let whatever bones be in it rest in peace. Yet I must needs add that the inscription on the bust seems to imply that Shakspeare's grave was directly underneath it.

The poet's bust is affixed to the northern wall of the church, the base of it being about a man's height, or rather more, above the floor of the chancel. The features of this piece of sculpture are entirely unlike any portrait of Shakspeare that I have ever seen, and compel me to take down the beautiful, lofty-browed, and noble picture of him

which has hitherto hung in my mental portrait gallery. The bust cannot be said to represent a beautiful face or an eminently noble head; but it clutches firmly hold of one's sense of reality and insists upon your accepting it, if not as Shakspeare the poet, yet as the wealthy burgher of Stratford, the friend of John a' Combe, who lies yonder in the corner. I know not what the phrenologists say to the bust. The forehead is but moderately developed, and retreats somewhat, the upper part of the skull rising pyramidally; the eyes are prominent almost beyond the penthouse of the brow; the upper lip is so long that it must have been almost a deformity, unless the sculptor artistically exaggerated its length, in consideration that, on the pedestal, it must be foreshortened by being looked at from below. On the whole, Shakspeare must have had a singular rather than a prepossessing face; and it is wonderful how, with this bust before its eyes, the world has persisted in maintaining an erroneous notion of his appearance, allowing painters and sculptors to foist their idealized nonsense on us all, instead of the genuine man. For my part, the Shakspeare of my mind's eye is henceforth to be a personage of a ruddy

English complexion, with a reasonably capacious brow, intelligent and quickly observant eyes, a nose curved slightly outward, a long, queer upper-lip, with the mouth a little unclosed beneath it, and cheeks considerably developed in the lower part and beneath the chin. But when Shakspeare was himself (for nine-tenths of the time, according to all appearances, he was but the burgher of Stratford), he doubtless shone through this dull mask and transfigured it into the face of an angel.

Fifteen or twenty feet behind the row of Shakspeare gravestones is the great east window of the church, now brilliant with stained glass of recent manufacture. On one side of this window, under a sculptured arch of marble, lies a full-length marble figure of John a' Combe, clad in what I take to be a robe of municipal dignity, and holding its hands devoutly clasped. It is a sturdy English figure, with coarse features, a type of ordinary man whom we smile to see immortalized in the sculpturesque material of poets and heroes; but the prayerful attitude encourages us to believe that the old usurer may not, after all, have had that grim reception in the other world which Shakspeare's

squib foreboded for him. By-the-by, till I grew somewhat familiar with Warwickshire pronunciation, I never understood that the point of those ill-natured lines was a pun. "'Oho!' quoth the Devil, 't is my John a' Combe!'"—that is, "My John has come!"

Close to the poet's bust is a nameless, oblong, cubic tomb, supposed to be that of a clerical dignitary of the fourteenth century. The church has other mural monuments and altar tombs, one or two of the latter upholding the recumbent figures of knights in armour and their dames, very eminent and worshipful personages in their day, no doubt, but doomed to appear for ever intrusive and impertinent within the precincts which Shakspeare has made his own. His renown is tyrannous, and suffers nothing else to be recognized within the scope of its material presence, unless illuminated by some side-ray from himself. The clerk informed me that interments no longer take place in any part of the church. And it is better so; for methinks a person of delicate individuality, curious about his burial-place, and desirous of six feet of earth for himself alone, could never endure to lie buried near Shakspeare, but would rise up at mid-

night and grope his way out of the church-door, rather than sleep in the shadow of so stupendous a memory.

I should hardly have dared to add another to the innumerable descriptions of Stratford-on-Avon, if it had not seemed to me that this would form a fitting framework to some reminiscences of a very remarkable woman. Her labour, while she lived, was of a nature and purpose outwardly irreverent to the name of Shakspeare, yet, by its actual tendency, entitling her to the distinction of being that one of all his worshippers who sought, though she knew it not, to place the richest and stateliest diadem upon his brow. We Americans, at least, in the scanty annals of our literature, cannot afford to forget her high and conscientious exercise of noble faculties, which, indeed, if you look at the matter in one way, evolved only a miserable error, but, more fairly considered, produced a result worth almost what it cost her. Her faith in her own ideas was so genuine, that, erroneous as they were, it transmuted them to gold, or, at all events, interfused a large proportion of that precious and indestructible substance among the waste material from which it can readily be sifted.

The only time I ever saw Miss Bacon was in London, where she had lodgings in Spring Street, Sussex Gardens, at the house of a grocer, a portly, middle-aged, civil, and friendly man, who, as well as his wife, appeared to feel a personal kindness towards their lodger. I was ushered up two (and I rather believe three) pair of stairs into a parlour somewhat humbly furnished, and told that Miss Bacon would come soon. There were a number of books on the table, and, looking into them, I found that every one had some reference, more or less immediate, to her Shakspearian theory,—a volume of Raleigh's *History of the World*, a volume of Montaigne, a volume of Lord Bacon's letters, a volume of Shakspeare's plays; and on another table lay a large roll of manuscript, which I presume to have been a portion of her work. To be sure, there was a pocket-Bible among the books, but everything else referred to the one despotic idea that had got possession of her mind; and as it had engrossed her whole soul as well as her intellect, I have no doubt that she had established subtile connections between it and the Bible likewise. As is apt to be the case with solitary students, Miss Bacon probably read late and rose

late; for I took up Montaigne (it was Hazlitt's translation), and had been reading his journey to Italy a good while before she appeared.

I had expected (the more shame for me, having no other ground of such expectation than that she was a literary woman) to see a very homely, uncouth, elderly personage, and was quite agreeably disappointed by her aspect. She was rather uncommonly tall, and had a striking and expressive face, dark hair, dark eyes, which shone with an inward light as soon as she began to speak, and by-and-by a colour came into her cheeks and made her look almost young. Not that she really was so; she must have been beyond middle-age: and there was no unkindness in coming to that conclusion, because, making allowance for years and ill-health, I could suppose her to have been handsome and exceedingly attractive once. Though wholly estranged from society, there was little or no restraint or embarrassment in her manner: lonely people are generally glad to give utterance to their pent-up ideas, and often bubble over with them as freely as children with their new-found syllables. I cannot tell how it came about, but we immediately found ourselves taking a friendly and

familiar tone together, and began to talk as if we had known one another a very long while. A little preliminary correspondence had indeed smoothed the way, and we had a definite topic in the contemplated publication of her book.

She was very communicative about her theory, and would have been much more so had I desired it; but, being conscious within myself of a sturdy unbelief, I deemed it fair and honest rather to repress than draw her out upon the subject. Unquestionably, she was a monomaniac; these overmastering ideas about the authorship of Shakspeare's plays, and the deep political philosophy concealed beneath the surface of them, had completely thrown her off her balance; but at the same time they had wonderfully developed her intellect, and made her what she would not otherwise have become. It was a very singular phenomenon: a system of philosophy growing up in this woman's mind without her volition,—contrary, in fact, to the determined resistance of her volition,—and substituting itself in the place of everything that originally grew there. To have based such a system on fancy, and unconsciously elaborated it for herself, was almost as wonderful

as really to have found it in the plays. But, in a certain sense, she did actually find it there. Shakspeare has surface beneath surface, to an immeasurable depth, adapted to the plummet-line of every reader; his works present many phases of truth, each with scope large enough to fill a contemplative mind. Whatever you seek in him you will surely discover, provided you seek truth. There is no exhausting the various interpretation of his symbols; and a thousand years hence, a world of new readers will possess a whole library of new books, as we ourselves do, in these volumes old already. I had half a mind to suggest to Miss Bacon this explanation of her theory, but forbore, because (as I could readily perceive) she had as princely a spirit as Queen Elizabeth herself, and would at once have motioned me from the room.

I had heard, long ago, that she believed that the material evidences of her dogma as to the authorship, together with the key of the new philosophy, would be found buried in Shakspeare's grave. Recently, as I understood her, this notion had been somewhat modified, and was now accurately defined and fully developed in her mind, with a result of perfect certainty. In Lord Bacon's

letters, on which she laid her finger as she spoke, she had discovered the key and clue to the whole mystery. There were definite and minute instructions how to find a will and other documents relating to the conclave of Elizabethan philosophers, which were concealed (when and by whom she did not inform me) in a hollow space in the under surface of Shakspeare's gravestone. Thus the terrible prohibition to remove the stone was accounted for. The directions, she intimated, went completely and precisely to the point, obviating all difficulties in the way of coming at the treasure, and even, if I remember right, were so contrived as to ward off any troublesome consequences likely to ensue from the interference of the parish officers. All that Miss Bacon now remained in England for—indeed, the object for which she had come hither, and which had kept her here for three years past—was to obtain possession of these material and unquestionable proofs of the authenticity of her theory.

She communicated all this strange matter in a low, quiet tone; while, on my part, I listened as quietly, and without any expression of dissent. Controversy against a faith so settled would have

shut her up at once, and that, too, without in the least weakening her belief in the existence of those treasures of the tomb; and had it been possible to convince her of their intangible nature, I apprehend that there would have been nothing left for the poor enthusiast save to collapse and die. She frankly confessed that she could no longer bear the society of those who did not at least lend a certain sympathy to her views, if not fully share in them; and, meeting little sympathy or none, she had now entirely secluded herself from the world. In all these years she had seen Mrs. Farrar a few times, but had long ago given her up,—Carlyle once or twice, but not of late, although he had received her kindly; Mr. Buchanan, while minister in England, had once called on her, and General Campbell, our consul in London, had met her two or three times on business. With these exceptions which she marked so scrupulously that it was perceptible what epochs they were in the monotonous passage of her days, she had lived in the profoundest solitude. She never walked out; she suffered much from ill-health; and yet, she assured me, she was perfectly happy.

I could well conceive it; for Miss Bacon

imagined herself to have received (what is certainly the greatest boon ever assigned to mortals) a high mission in the world, with adequate powers for its accomplishment; and lest even these should prove insufficient, she had faith that special interpositions of Providence were forwarding her human efforts. This idea was continually coming to the surface, during our interview. She believed, for example, that she had been providentially led to her lodging-house and put in relations with the good-natured grocer and his family; and, to say the truth, considering what a savage and stealthy tribe the London lodging-house keepers usually are, the honest kindness of this man and his household appeared to have been little less than miraculous. Evidently, too, she thought that Providence had brought me forward—a man somewhat connected with literature—at the critical juncture when she needed a negotiator with the booksellers; and, on my part, though little accustomed to regard myself as a divine minister, and though I might even have preferred that Providence should select some other instrument, I had no scruple in undertaking to do what I could for her. Her book, as I could

see by turning it over, was a very remarkable one, and worthy of being offered to the public, which, if wise enough to appreciate it, would be thankful for what was good in it and merciful to its faults. It was founded on a prodigious error, but was built up from that foundation with a good many prodigious truths. And, at all events, whether I could aid her literary views or no, it would have been both rash and impertinent in me to attempt drawing poor Miss Bacon out of her delusions, which were the condition on which she lived in comfort and joy, and in the exercise of great intellectual power. So I left her to dream as she pleased about the treasures of Shakspeare's tombstone, and to form whatever designs might seem good to herself for obtaining possession of them. I was sensible of a lady-like feeling of propriety in Miss Bacon, and a New England orderliness in her character, and, in spite of her bewilderment, a sturdy common sense, which I trusted would begin to operate at the right time, and keep her from any actual extravagance. And as regarded this matter of the tombstone, so it proved.

The interview lasted above an hour, during

which she flowed out freely, as to the sole auditor, capable of any degree of intelligent sympathy, whom she had met with in a very long while. Her conversation was remarkably suggestive, alluring forth one's own ideas and fantasies from the shy places where they usually haunt. She was indeed an admirable talker, considering how long she had held her tongue for lack of a listener,—pleasant, sunny and shadowy, often piquant, and giving glimpses of all a woman's various and readily changeable moods and humours; and beneath them all there ran a deep and powerful under-current of earnestness, which did not fail to produce in the listener's mind something like a temporary faith in what she herself believed so fervently. But the streets of London are not favourable to enthusiasms of this kind, nor, in fact, are they likely to flourish anywhere in the English atmosphere; so that, long before reaching Paternoster Row, I felt that it would be a difficult and doubtful matter to advocate the publication of Miss Bacon's book. Nevertheless, it did finally get published.

Months before that happened, however, Miss Bacon had taken up her residence at Stratford-on-

Avon, drawn thither by the magnetism of those rich secrets which she supposed to have been hidden by Raleigh, or Bacon, or I know not whom, in Shakspeare's grave, and protected there by a curse, as pirates used to bury their gold in the guardianship of a fiend. She took a humble lodging and began to haunt the church like a ghost. But she did not condescend to any stratagem or underhand attempt to violate the grave, which, had she been capable of admitting such an idea, might possibly have been accomplished by the aid of a resurrection-man. As her first step, she made acquaintance with the clerk, and began to sound him as to the feasibility of her enterprise and his own willingness to engage in it. The clerk apparently listened with not unfavourable ears; but, as his situation (which the fees of pilgrims, more numerous than at any Catholic shrine, render lucrative) would have been forfeited by any malfeasance in office, he stipulated for liberty to consult the vicar. Miss Bacon requested to tell her own story to the reverend gentleman, and seems to have been received by him with the utmost kindness, and even to have succeeded in making a certain impression on his mind as to the desira-

bility of the search. As their interview had been under the seal of secrecy, he asked permission to consult a friend, who, as Miss Bacon either found out or surmised, was a practitioner of the law. What the legal friend advised she did not learn; but the negotiation continued, and certainly was never broken off by an absolute refusal on the vicar's part. He, perhaps, was kindly temporizing with our poor countrywoman, whom an Englishman of ordinary mould would have sent to a lunatic asylum at once. I cannot help fancying, however, that her familiarity with the events of Shakspeare's life, and of his death and burial, (of which she would speak as if she had been present at the edge of the grave,) and all the history, literature, and personalities of the Elizabethan age, together with the prevailing power of her own belief, and the eloquence with which she knew how to enforce it, had really gone some little way toward making a convert of the good clergyman. If so, I honour him above all the hierarchy of England.

The affair certainly looked very hopeful. However erroneously, Miss Bacon had understood from the vicar that no obstacles would be interposed to

the investigation, and that he himself would sanction it with his presence. It was to take place after nightfall; and all preliminary arrangements being made, the vicar and clerk professed to wait only her word in order to set about lifting the awful stone from the sepulchre. So, at least, Miss Bacon believed; and as her bewilderment was entirely in her own thoughts, and never disturbed her perception or accurate remembrance of external things, I see no reason to doubt it, except it be the tinge of absurdity in the fact. But, in this apparently prosperous state of things, her own convictions began to falter. A doubt stole into her mind whether she might not have mistaken the depository and mode of concealment of those historic treasures; and after once admitting the doubt, she was afraid to hazard the shock of uplifting the stone and finding nothing. She examined the surface of the gravestone, and endeavoured, without stirring it, to estimate whether it were of such thickness as to be capable of containing the archives of the Elizabethan club. She went over anew the proofs, the clues, the enigmas, the pregnant sentences, which she had discovered in Bacon's letters and elsewhere, and now was

frightened to perceive that they did not point so definitely to Shakspeare's tomb as she had heretofore supposed. There was an unmistakably distinct reference to a tomb, but it might be Bacon's, or Raleigh's, or Spenser's; and instead of the "Old Player," as she profanely called him, it might be either of those three illustrious dead, poet, warrior, or statesman, whose ashes, in Westminster Abbey, or the Tower burial-ground, or wherever they sleep, it was her mission to disturb. It is very possible, moreover, that her acute mind may always have had a lurking and deeply latent distrust of its own fantasies, and that this now became strong enough to restrain her from a decisive step.

But she continued to hover around the church, and seems to have had full freedom of entrance in the daytime, and special license, on one occasion at least, at a late hour of the night. She went thither with a dark lantern, which could but twinkle like a glow-worm through the volume of obscurity that filled the great dusky edifice. Groping her way up the aisle and towards the chancel, she sat down on the elevated part of the pavement above Shakspeare's grave. If the divine

poet really wrote the inscription there, and cared as much about the quiet of his bones as its deprecatory earnestness would imply, it was time for those crumbling relics to bestir themselves under her sacrilegious feet. But they were safe. She made no attempt to disturb them; though, I believe, she looked narrowly into the crevices between Shakspeare's and the two adjacent stones, and in some way satisfied herself that her single strength would suffice to lift the former, in case of need. She threw the feeble ray of her lantern up towards the bust, but could not make it visible beneath the darkness of the vaulted roof. Had she been subject to superstitious terrors, it is impossible to conceive of a situation that could better entitle her to feel them, for, if Shakspeare's ghost would rise at any provocation, it must have shown itself then; but it is my sincere belief, that, if his figure had appeared within the scope of her dark lantern, in his slashed doublet and gown, and with his eyes bent on her beneath the high, bald forehead, just as we see him in the bust, she would have met him fearlessly and controverted his claims to the authorship of the plays, to his very face. She had taught herself to contemn "Lord Leices-

ter's groom" (it was one of her disdainful epithets for the world's incomparable poet) so thoroughly, that even his disembodied spirit would hardly have found civil treatment at Miss Bacon's hands.

Her vigil, though it appears to have had no definite object, continued far into the night. Several times she heard a low movement in the aisles: a stealthy, dubious foot-fall prowling about in the darkness, now here, now there, among the pillars and ancient tombs, as if some restless inhabitants of the latter had crept forth to peep at the intruder. By-and-by the clerk made his appearance, and confessed that he had been watching her ever since she entered the church.

About this time it was that a strange sort of weariness seems to have fallen upon her: her toil was all but done, her great purpose, as she believed, on the very point of accomplishment, when she began to regret that so stupendous a mission had been imposed on the fragility of a woman. Her faith in the new philosophy was as mighty as ever, and so was her confidence in her own adequate development of it, now about to be given to the world; yet she wished, or fancied so, that it might never have been her duty to achieve this unparal-

leled task, and to stagger feebly forward under her immense burden of responsibility and renown. So far as her personal concern in the matter went, she would gladly have forfeited the reward of her patient study and labour for so many years, her exile from her country and estrangement from her family and friends, her sacrifice of health and all other interest to this one pursuit, if she could only find herself free to dwell in Stratford and be forgotten. She liked the old slumberous town, and awarded the only praise that ever I knew her to bestow on Shakspeare, the individual man, by acknowledging that his taste in a residence was good, and that he knew how to choose a suitable retirement for a person of shy but genial temperament. And at this point I cease to possess the means of tracing her vicissitudes of feeling any farther. In consequence of some advice which I fancied it my duty to tender, as being the only confidant whom she now had in the world, I fell under Miss Bacon's most severe and passionate displeasure, and was cast off by her in the twinkling of an eye. It was a misfortune to which her friends were always particularly liable; but I think that none of them ever loved, or even

respected, her most ingenuous and noble, but likewise most sensitive and tumultuous, character the less for it.

At that time her book was passing through the press. Without prejudice to her literary ability, it must be allowed that Miss Bacon was wholly unfit to prepare her own work for publication, because, among many other reasons, she was too thoroughly in earnest to know what to leave out. Every leaf and line was sacred, for all had been written under so deep a conviction of truth as to assume, in her eyes, the aspect of inspiration. A practised book-maker, with entire control of her materials, would have shaped out a duodecimo volume full of eloquent and ingenious dissertation, —criticisms which quite take the colour and pungency out of other people's critical remarks on Shakspeare,—philosophic truths which she imagined herself to have found at the roots of his conceptions, and which certainly come from no inconsiderable depth somewhere. There was a great amount of rubbish, which any competent editor would have shovelled out of the way. But Miss Bacon thrust the whole bulk of inspiration and nonsense into the press in a lump, and there

tumbled out a ponderous octavo volume, which fell with a dead thump at the feet of the public, and has never been picked up. A few persons turned over one or two of the leaves, as it lay there, and essayed to kick the volume deeper in the mud; for they were the hack critics of the minor periodical press in London, than whom, I suppose, though excellent fellows in their way, there are no gentlemen in the world less sensible of any sanctity in a book, or less likely to recognize an author's heart in it, or more utterly careless about bruising, if they do recognize it. It is their trade. They could not do otherwise. I never thought of blaming them. It was not for such an Englishman as one of these to get beyond the idea that an assault was meditated on England's greatest poet. From the scholars and critics of her own country, indeed, Miss Bacon might have looked for a worthier appreciation, because many of the best of them have higher cultivation, and finer and deeper literary sensibilities than all but the very profoundest and brightest of Englishmen. But they are not a courageous body of men; they dare not think a truth that has an odour of absurdity, lest they

should feel themselves bound to speak it out. If any American ever wrote a word in her behalf, Miss Bacon never knew it, nor did I. Our journalists at once republished some of the most brutal vituperations of the English press, thus pelting their poor countrywoman with stolen mud, without even waiting to know whether the ignominy was deserved. And they never have known it, to this day, nor ever will.

The next intelligence I had of Miss Bacon was by a letter from the mayor of Stratford-on-Avon. He was a medical man, and wrote both in his official and professional character, telling me that an American lady, who had recently published what the mayor called a "Shakspeare book," was afflicted with insanity. In a lucid interval she had referred to me, as a person who had some knowledge of her family and affairs. What she may have suffered before her intellect gave way, we had better not try to imagine. No author had ever hoped so confidently as she; none ever failed more utterly. A superstitious fancy might suggest that the anathema on Shakspeare's tombstone had fallen heavily on her head in requital of even the unaccomplished purpose of disturbing the dust

beneath, and that the "Old Player" had kept so quietly in his grave, on the night of her vigil, because he foresaw how soon and terribly he would be avenged. But if that benign spirit takes any care or cognizance of such things now, he has surely requited the injustice that she sought to do him—the high justice that she really did—by a tenderness of love and pity of which only he could be capable. What matters it, though she called him by some other name? He had wrought a greater miracle on her than on all the world besides. This bewildered enthusiast had recognized a depth in the man whom she decried, which scholars, critics, and learned societies, devoted to the elucidation of his unrivalled scenes, had never imagined to exist there. She had paid him the loftiest honour that all these ages of renown have been able to accumulate upon his memory. And when, not many months after the outward failure of her lifelong object, she passed into the better world, I know not why we should hesitate to believe that the immortal poet may have met her on the threshold and led her in, re-assuring her with friendly and comfortable words, and thanking her (yet with a smile of gentle humour in his eyes

at the thought of certain mistaken speculations) for having interpreted him to mankind so well.

I believe that it has been the fate of this remarkable book never to have had more than a single reader. I myself am acquainted with it only in insulated chapters and scattered pages and paragraphs. But, since my return to America, a young man of genius and enthusiasm has assured me that he has positively read the book from beginning to end, and is completely a convert to its doctrines. It belongs to him, therefore, and not to me,—whom, in almost the last letter that I received from her, she declared unworthy to meddle with her work,—it belongs surely to this one individual, who has done her so much justice as to know what she wrote, to place Miss Bacon in her due position before the public and posterity.

This has been too sad a story. To lighten the recollection of it, I will think of my stroll homeward past Charlecote Park, where I beheld the most stately elms, singly, in clumps, and in groves, scattered all about in the sunniest, shadiest, sleepiest fashion; so that I could not but believe in a lengthened, loitering, drowsy enjoyment which these trees must have in their existence. Diffused

over slow-paced centuries, it need not be keen nor bubble into thrills and ecstasies, like the momentary delights of short-lived human beings. They were civilized trees, known to man and befriended by him for ages past. There is an indescribable difference—as I believe I have heretofore endeavoured to express—between the tamed, but by no means effete (on the contrary, the richer and more luxuriant) nature of England, and the rude, shaggy, barbarous nature which offers us its racier companionship in America. No less a change has been wrought among the wildest creatures that inhabit what the English call their forests. By-and-by, among those refined and venerable trees, I saw a large herd of deer, mostly reclining, but some standing in picturesque groups, while the stags threw their large antlers aloft, as if they had been taught to make themselves tributary to the scenic effect. Some were running fleetly about, vanishing from light into shadow and glancing forth again, with here and there a little fawn careering at its mother's heels. These deer are almost in the same relation to the wild, natural state of their kind that the trees of an English park hold to the rugged growth of an American

forest. They have held a certain intercourse with man for immemorial years; and, most probably, the stag that Shakspeare killed was one of the progenitors of this very herd, and may himself have been a partly civilized and humanized deer, though in a less degree than these remote posterity. They are a little wilder than sheep, but they do not snuff the air at the approach of human beings, nor evince much alarm at their pretty close proximity; although if you continue to advance, they toss their heads and take to their heels in a kind of mimic terror, or something akin to feminine skittishness, with a dim remembrance or tradition, as it were, of their having come of a wild stock. They have so long been fed and protected by man, that they must have lost many of their native instincts, and, I suppose, could not live comfortably through even an English winter without human help. One is sensible of a gentle scorn at them for such dependency, but feels none the less kindly disposed towards the half-domesticated race; and it may have been his observation of these tamer characteristics in the Charlecote herd that suggested to Shakspeare the tender and pitiful description of a wounded stag, in "As You Like It."

At a distance of some hundreds of yards from Charlecote Hall, and almost hidden by the trees between it and the roadside, is an old brick archway and porter's lodge. In connection with this entrance, there appear to have been a wall and an ancient moat, the latter of which is still visible, a shallow, grassy scoop along the base of an embankment of the lawn. About fifty yards within the gateway stands the house, forming three sides of a square, with three gables in a row on the front, and on each of the two wings; and there are several towers and turrets at the angles, together with projecting windows, antique balconies, and other quaint ornaments suitable to the half-Gothic taste in which the edifice was built. Over the gateway is the Lucy coat-of-arms, emblazoned in its proper colours. The mansion dates from the early days of Elizabeth, and probably looked very much the same as now when Shakspeare was brought before Sir Thomas Lucy for outrages among his deer. The impression is not that of gray antiquity, but of stable and time-honoured gentility, still as vital as ever.

It is a most delightful place. All about the house and domain there is a perfection of comfort and domestic taste, an amplitude of convenience,

which could have been brought about only by the slow ingenuity and labour of many successive generations, intent upon adding all possible improvement to the home where years gone by and years to come give a sort of permanence to the intangible present. An American is sometimes tempted to fancy that only by this long process can real homes be produced. One man's lifetime is not enough for the accomplishment of such a work of Art and Nature, almost the greatest merely temporary one that is confided to him; too little, at any rate,—yet, perhaps, too long when he is discouraged by the idea that he must make his house warm and delightful for a miscellaneous race of successors, of whom the one thing certain is, that his own grandchildren will not be among them. Such repinings as are here suggested, however, come only from the fact, that, bred in English habits of thought, as most of us are, we have not yet modified our instincts to the necessities of our new forms of life. A lodging in a wig-wam or under a tent has really as many advantages, when we come to know them, as a home beneath the roof-tree of Charlecote Hall. But, alas! our philosophers have not yet taught

us what is best, nor have our poets sung us what is beautifullest, in the kind of life that we must lead; and, therefore, we still read the old English wisdom, and harp upon the ancient strings. And thence it happens, that, when we look at a time-honoured hall, it seems more possible for men who inherit such a home, than for ourselves, to lead noble and graceful lives, quietly doing good and lovely things as their daily work, and achieving deeds of simple greatness when circumstances require them. I sometimes apprehend that our institutions may perish before we shall have discovered the most precious of the possibilities which they involve.

LICHFIELD AND UTTOXETER.

After my first visit to Leamington Spa, I went by an indirect route to Lichfield, and put up at the Black Swan. Had I known where to find it, I would much rather have established myself at the inn formerly kept by the worthy Mr. Boniface so famous for his ale in Farquhar's time. The Black Swan is an old-fashioned hotel, its street-front being penetrated by an arched passage, in either side of which is an entrance-door to the different parts of the house, and through which, and over the large stones of its pavement, all vehicles and horsemen rumble and clatter into an enclosed court-yard, with a thunderous uproar among the contiguous rooms and chambers. I appeared to be the only guest of the spacious establishment, but may have had a few fellow-lodgers hidden in their separate parlours, and

utterly eschewing that community of interests which is the characteristic feature of life in an American hotel. At any rate, I had the great, dull, dingy, and dreary coffee-room, with its heavy old mahogany chairs and tables, all to myself, and not a soul to exchange a word with, except the waiter, who, like most of his class in England, had evidently left his conversational abilities uncultivated. No former practice of solitary living, nor habits of reticence, nor well-tested self-dependence for occupation of mind and amusement, can quite avail, as I now proved, to dissipate the ponderous gloom of an English coffee-room under such circumstances as these, with no book at hand save the county directory, nor any newspaper but a torn local journal of five days ago. So I buried myself, betimes, in a huge heap of ancient feathers, (there is no other kind of bed in these old inns,) let my head sink into an unsubstantial pillow, and slept a stifled sleep, infested with such a fragmentary confusion of dreams that I took them to be a medley, compounded of the night-troubles of all my predecessors in that same unrestful couch. And when I awoke, the musty odour of a bygone century was in my nostrils — a faint, elusive smell, of

which I never had any conception before crossing the Atlantic.

In the morning, after a mutton-chop and a cup of chicory in the dusky coffee-room, I went forth and bewildered myself a little while among the crooked streets, in quest of one or two objects that had chiefly attracted me to the spot. The city is of very ancient date, and its name in the old Saxon tongue has a dismal import that would apply well, in these days and for ever hence forward, to many an unhappy locality in our native land. Lichfield signifies "The Field of the Dead Bodies"—an epithet, however, which the town did not assume in remembrance of a battle, but which probably sprung up by a natural process, like a sprig of rue or other funereal weed, out of the graves of two princely brothers, sons of a pagan king of Mercia, who were converted by Saint Chad, and afterwards martyred for their Christian faith. Nevertheless, I was but little interested in the legends of the remote antiquity of Lichfield, being drawn thither partly to see its beautiful cathedral, and still more, I believe, because it was the birthplace of Dr. Johnson, with whose sturdy English character I became acquainted,

at a very early period of my life, through the good offices of Mr. Boswell. In truth, he seems as familiar to my recollection, and almost as vivid in his personal aspect to my mind's eye, as the kindly figure of my own grandfather. It is only a solitary child—left much to such wild modes of culture as he chooses for himself while yet ignorant what culture means, standing on tiptoe to pull down books from no very lofty shelf, and then shutting himself up, as it were, between the leaves, going astray through the volume at his own pleasure, and comprehending it rather by his sensibilities and affections than his intellect—that child is the only student that ever gets the sort of intimacy which I am now thinking of, with a literary personage. I do not remember, indeed, ever caring much about any of the stalwart doctor's grandiloquent productions, except his two stern and masculine poems, *London*, and *The Vanity of Human Wishes*; it was as a man, a talker, and a humorist, that I knew and loved him, appreciating many of his qualities perhaps more thoroughly than I do now, though never seeking to put my instinctive perception of his character into language.

Beyond all question, I might have had a wiser friend than he. The atmosphere in which alone he breathed was dense; his awful dread of death showed how much muddy imperfection was to be cleansed out of him, before he could be capable of spiritual existence; he meddled only with the surface of life, and never cared to penetrate farther than to ploughshare depth; his very sense and sagacity were but a one-eyed clear-sightedness. I laughed at him, sometimes, standing beside his knee. And yet, considering that my native propensities were towards Fairy Land, and also how much yeast is generally mixed up with the mental sustenance of a New Englander, it may not have been altogether amiss, in those childish and boyish days, to keep pace with this heavy-footed traveller, and feed on the gross diet that he carried in his knapsack. It is wholesome food even now. And, then, how English! Many of the latent sympathies that enabled me to enjoy the Old Country so well, and that so readily amalgamated themselves with the American ideas that seemed most adverse to them, may have been derived from, or fostered and kept alive by, the great English moralist. Never was a descrip-

tive epithet more nicely appropriate than that! Dr. Johnson's morality was as English an article as a beefsteak.

The city of Lichfield (only the cathedral towns are called cities in England) stands on an ascending site. It has not so many old gabled houses as Coventry, for example, but still enough to gratify an American appetite for the antiquities of domestic architecture. The people, too, have an old-fashioned way with them, and stare at the passing visitor as if the railway had not yet quite accustomed them to the novelty of strange faces moving along their ancient sidewalks. The old women whom I met, in several instances, dropt me a courtesy; and as they were of decent and comfortable exterior, and kept quietly on their way without pause or further greeting, it certainly was not allowable to interpret their little act of respect as a modest method of asking for sixpence; so that I had the pleasure of considering it a remnant of the reverential and hospitable manners of elder times, when the rare presence of a stranger might be deemed worth a general acknowledgment. Positively, coming from such humble sources, I took it all the more as a

welcome on behalf of the inhabitants, and would not have exchanged it for an invitation from the mayor and magistrates to a public dinner. Yet I wish, merely for the experiment's sake, that I could have emboldened myself to hold out the aforesaid sixpence to at least one of the old ladies.

In my wanderings about town, I came to an artificial piece of water, called the Minster Pool. It fills the immense cavity in a ledge of rock, whence the building materials of the cathedral were quarried out a great many centuries ago. I should never have guessed the little lake to be of man's creation, so very pretty and quietly picturesque an object has it grown to be, with its green banks, and the old trees hanging over its glassy surface, in which you may see reflected some of the battlements of the majestic structure that once lay here in unshaped stone. Some little children stood on the edge of the Pool, angling with pin-hooks; and the scene reminded me (though really, to be quite fair with the reader, the gist of the analogy has now escaped me,) of that mysterious lake in the *Arabian Nights*, which had once been a palace and a city, and where a fisherman used to pull out the former inhabitants

in the guise of enchanted fishes. There is no need of fanciful associations to make the spot interesting. It was in the porch of one of the houses, in the street that runs beside the Minster Pool, that Lord Brooke was slain, in the time of the Parliamentary war, by a shot from the battlements of the cathedral, which was then held by the Royalists as a fortress. The incident is commemorated by an inscription on a stone, inlaid into the wall of the house.

I know not what rank the cathedral of Lichfield holds among its sister edifices in England as a piece of magnificent architecture. Except that of Chester, (the grim and simple nave of which stands yet unrivalled in my memory,) and one or two small ones in North Wales, hardly worthy of the name of cathedrals, it was the first that I had seen. To my uninstructed vision, it seemed the object best worth gazing at in the whole world; and now, after beholding a great many more, I remember it with less prodigal admiration only because others are as magnificent as itself. The traces remaining in my memory represent it as airy rather than massive. A multitude of beautiful shapes appeared to be com-

prehended within its single outline; it was a kind of kaleidoscopic mystery, so rich a variety of aspects did it assume from each altered point of view, through the presentation of a different face, and the re-arrangement of its peaks and pinnacles and the three battlemented towers, with the spires that shot heavenward from all three, but one loftier than its fellows. Thus it impressed you, at every change, as a newly created structure of the passing moment, in which yet you lovingly recognized the half-vanished structure of the instant before, and felt, moreover, a joyful faith in the indestructible existence of all this cloudlike vicissitude. A Gothic cathedral is surely the most wonderful work which mortal man has yet achieved, so vast, so intricate, and so profoundly simple, with such strange, delightful recesses in its grand figure, so difficult to comprehend within one idea, and yet all so consonant that it ultimately draws the beholder and his universe into its harmony. It is the only thing in the world that is vast enough and rich enough.

Not that I felt, or was worthy to feel, an unmingled enjoyment in gazing at this wonder. I could not elevate myself to its spiritual height, any

more than I could have climbed from the ground to the summit of one of its pinnacles. Ascending but a little way, I continually fell back and lay in a kind of despair, conscious that a flood of uncomprehended beauty was pouring down upon me, of which I could appropriate only the minutest portion. After a hundred years, incalculably as my higher sympathies might be invigorated by so divine an employment, I should still be a gazer from below and at an awful distance, as yet remotely excluded from the interior mystery. But it was something gained, even to have that painful sense of my own limitations, and that half-smothered yearning to soar beyond them. The cathedral showed me how earthly I was, but yet whispered deeply of immortality. After all, this was probably the best lesson that it could bestow, and, taking it as thoroughly as possible home to my heart, I was fain to be content. If the truth must be told, my ill-trained enthusiasm soon flagged, and I began to lose the vision of a spiritual or ideal edifice behind the time-worn and weather-stained front of the actual structure. Whenever that is the case, it is most reverential to look another way; but the mood disposes one

to minute investigation, and I took advantage of it to examine the intricate and multitudinous adornment that was lavished on the exterior wall of this great church. Everywhere there were empty niches where statues had been thrown down, and here and there a statue still lingered in its niche; and over the chief entrance, and extending across the whole breadth of the building, was a row of angels, sainted personages, martyrs, and kings, sculptured in reddish stone. Being much corroded by the moist English atmosphere, during four or five hundred winters that they had stood there, these benign and majestic figures perversely put me in mind of the appearance of a sugar image, after a child has been holding it in his mouth. The venerable infant Time has evidently found them sweet morsels.

Inside of the minster there is a long and lofty nave, transepts of the same height, and side-aisles and chapels, dim nooks of holiness, where in Catholic times the lamps were continually burning before the richly decorated shrines of saints. In the audacity of my ignorance, as I humbly acknowledge it to have been, I criticised this great interior as too much broken into compartments,

and shorn of half its rightful impressiveness by the interposition of a screen betwixt the nave and chancel. It did not spread itself in breadth, but ascended to the roof in lofty narrowness. One large body of worshippers might have knelt down in the nave, others in each of the transepts, and smaller ones in the side-aisles, besides an indefinite number of esoteric enthusiasts in the mysterious sanctities beyond the screen. Thus it seemed to typify the exclusiveness of sects rather than the world-wide hospitality of genuine religion. I had imagined a cathedral with a scope more vast. These Gothic aisles, with their groined arches overhead, supported by clustered pillars in long vistas up and down, were venerable and magnificent, but included too much of the twilight of that monkish gloom out of which they grew. It is no matter whether I ever came to a more satisfactory appreciation of this kind of architecture; the only value of my strictures being to show the folly of looking at noble objects in the wrong mood, and the absurdity of a new visitant pretending to hold any opinion whatever on such subjects, instead of surrendering himself to the old builder's influence with childlike simplicity.

A great deal of white marble decorates the old stone-work of the aisles, in the shape of altars, obelisks, sarcophagi, and busts. Most of these memorials are commemorative of people locally distinguished, especially the deans and canons of the cathedral, with their relatives and families; and I found but two monuments of personages whom I had ever heard of,—one being Gilbert Walmesley, and the other Lady Mary Wortley Montague, a literary acquaintance of my boyhood. It was really pleasant to meet her there; for after a friend has lain in the grave far into the second century, she would be unreasonable to require any melancholy emotions in a chance interview at her tombstone. It adds a rich charm to sacred edifices, this time-honoured custom of burial in churches, after a few years, at least, when the mortal remains have turned to dust beneath the pavement, and the quaint devices and inscriptions still speak to you above. The statues that stood or reclined in several recesses of the cathedral had a kind of life, and I regarded them with an odd sort of deference, as if they were privileged denizens of the precinct. It was singular, too, how the memorial of the latest buried person, the man

whose features were familiar in the streets of Lichfield only yesterday, seemed precisely as much at home here as his mediæval predecessors. Henceforward he belonged to the cathedral like one of its original pillars. Methought this impression in my fancy might be the shadow of a spiritual fact. The dying melt into the great multitude of the Departed as quietly as a drop of water into the ocean, and, it may be, are conscious of no unfamiliarity with their new circumstances, but immediately become aware of an insufferable strangeness in the world which they have quitted. Death has not taken them away, but brought them home.

The vicissitudes and mischances of sublunary affairs, however, have not ceased to attend upon these marble inhabitants; for I saw the upper fragment of a sculptured lady, in a very old-fashioned garb, the lower half of whom had doubtless been demolished by Cromwell's soldiers when they took the minster by storm. And there lies the remnant of this devout lady on her slab, ever since the outrage, as for centuries before, with a countenance of divine serenity and her hands clasped in prayer, symbolizing a depth of

religious faith which no earthly turmoil or calamity could disturb. Another piece of sculpture (apparently a favourite subject in the middle ages, for I have seen several like it in other cathedrals) was a reclining skeleton, as faithfully representing an open-work of bones as could well be expected in a solid block of marble, and at a period, moreover, when the mysteries of the human frame were rather to be guessed at than revealed. Whatever the anatomical defects of its production, the old sculptor had succeeded in making it ghastly beyond measure. How much mischief has been wrought upon us by this invariable gloom of the Gothic imagination; flinging itself like a death-scented pall over our conceptions of the future state, smothering our hopes, hiding our sky, and inducing dismal efforts to raise the harvest of immortality out of what is most opposite to it,—the grave!

The cathedral service is performed twice every day: at ten o'clock and at four. When I first entered, the choristers (young and old, but mostly, I think, boys, with voices inexpressibly sweet and clear, and as fresh as bird-notes) were just winding up their harmonious labours, and soon came

thronging through a side-door from the chancel into the nave. They were all dressed in long, white robes, and looked like a peculiar order of beings, created on purpose to hover between the roof and pavement of that dim, consecrated edifice, and illuminate it with divine melodies, reposing themselves, meanwhile, on the heavy grandeur of the organ-tones like cherubs on a golden cloud. All at once, however, one of the cherubic multitude pulled off his white gown, thus transforming himself before my very eyes into a commonplace youth of the day, in modern frock-coat and trousers of a decidedly provincial cut. This absurd little incident, I verily believe, had a sinister effect in putting me at odds with the proper influences of the cathedral, nor could I quite recover a suitable frame of mind during my stay there. But, emerging into the open air, I began to be sensible that I had left a magnificent interior behind me, and I have never quite lost the perception and enjoyment of it in these intervening years.

A large space in the immediate neighbourhood of the cathedral is called the Close, and comprises beautifully-kept lawns and a shadowy walk,

bordered by the dwellings of the ecclesiastical dignitaries of the diocese. All this row of episcopal, canonical, and clerical residences, has an air of the deepest quiet, repose, and well-protected, though not inaccessible, seclusion. They seemed capable of including everything that a saint could desire, and a great many more things than most of us sinners generally succeed in acquiring. Their most marked feature is a dignified comfort, looking as if no disturbance or vulgar intrusiveness could ever cross their thresholds, encroach upon their ornamented lawns, or straggle into the beautiful gardens that surround them with flower-beds and rich clumps of shrubbery. The episcopal palace is a stately mansion of stone, built somewhat in the Italian style, and bearing on its front the figures 1687, as the date of its erection. A large edifice of brick, which, if I remember, stood next to the palace, I took to be the residence of the second dignitary of the cathedral; and, in that case, it must have been the youthful home of Addison, whose father was Dean of Lichfield. I tried to fancy his figure on the delightful walk that extends in front of those priestly abodes, from which and the interior lawns

it is separated by an openwork iron fence, lined with rich old shrubbery, and overarched by a minster-aisle of venerable trees. This path is haunted by the shades of famous personages who have formerly trodden it. Johnson must have been familiar with it, both as a boy, and in his subsequent visits to Lichfield, an illustrious old man. Miss Seward, connected with so many literary reminiscences, lived in one of the adjacent houses. Tradition says that it was a favourite spot of Major André, who used to pace to and fro under these trees, waiting, perhaps, to catch a last angel-glimpse of Honoria Sneyd, before he crossed the ocean to encounter his dismal doom from an American court-martial. David Garrick no doubt scampered along the path in his boyish days, and, if he was an early student of the drama, must often have thought of those two airy characters of the *Beaux' Stratagem*, Archer and Aimwell, who, on this very ground, after attending service at the cathedral, contrive to make acquaintance with the ladies of the comedy. These creatures of mere fiction have as positive a substance now as the sturdy old figure of Johnson himself. They live, while realities have died.

The shadowy walk still glistens with their gold-embroidered memories.

Seeking for Johnson's birthplace, I found it in St. Mary's Square, which is not so much a square as the mere widening of a street. The house is tall and thin, of three stories, with a square front and a roof rising steep and high. On a side-view, the building looks as if it had been cut in two in the midst, there being no slope of the roof on that side. A ladder slanted against the wall; and a painter was giving a livelier hue to the plaster. In a corner-room of the basement, where old Michael Johnson may be supposed to have sold books, is now what we should call a dry-goods store, or, according to the English phrase, a mercer's and haberdasher's shop. The house has a private entrance on a cross-street, the door being accessible by several much-worn stone-steps, which are bordered by an iron balustrade. I set my foot on the steps and laid my hand on the balustrade, where Johnson's hand and foot must many a time have been, and, ascending to the door, I knocked once, and again, and again, and got no admittance. Going round to the shop-entrance, I tried to open it, but found it as fast bolted as the gate of Para-

dise. It is mortifying to be so balked in one's little enthusiasms; but looking round in quest of somebody to make inquiries of, I was a good deal consoled by the sight of Dr. Johnson himself, who happened, just at that moment, to be sitting at his ease nearly in the middle of St. Mary's Square, with his face turned towards his father's house.

Of course, it being almost fourscore years since the doctor laid aside his weary bulk of flesh, together with the ponderous melancholy that had so long weighed him down,—the intelligent reader will at once comprehend that he was marble in his substance, and seated in a marble chair, on an elevated stone pedestal. In short, it was a statue, sculptured by Lucas, and placed here in 1838, at the expense of Dr. Law, the reverend chancellor of the diocese.

The figure is colossal (though, perhaps, not much more so than the mountainous doctor himself), and looks down upon the spectator from its pedestal of ten or twelve feet high, with a broad, and heavy benignity of aspect, very like in feature to Sir Joshua Reynolds's portrait of Johnson, but calmer and sweeter in expression. Several big

books are piled up beneath his chair, and, if I mistake not, he holds a volume in his hand, thus blinking forth at the world out of his learned abstraction, owl-like, yet benevolent at heart. The statue is immensely massive, a vast ponderosity of stone, not finely spiritualized, nor, indeed, fully humanized, but rather resembling a great stone-boulder than a man. You must look with the eyes of faith and sympathy, or, possibly, you might lose the human being altogether, and find only a big stone within your mental grasp. On the pedestal are three bas-reliefs. In the first, Johnson is represented as hardly more than a baby, bestriding an old man's shoulders, resting his chin on the bald head which he embraces with his little arms, and listening earnestly to the high-church eloquence of Dr. Sacheverell. In the second tablet, he is seen riding to school on the shoulders of two of his comrades, while another boy supports him in the rear.

The third bas-relief possesses, to my mind, a great deal of pathos, to which my appreciative faculty is probably the more alive, because I have always been profoundly impressed by the incident here commemorated, and long ago tried

to tell it for the behoof of childish readers. It shows Johnson in the market-place of Uttoxeter, doing penance for an act of disobedience to his father, committed fifty years before. He stands bare-headed, a venerable figure, and a countenance extremely sad and woe-begone, with the wind and rain driving hard against him, and thus helping to suggest to the spectator the gloom of his inward state. Some market-people and children gaze awe-stricken into his face, and an aged man and woman, with clasped and uplifted hands, seem to be praying for him. These latter personages (whose introduction by the artist is none the less effective, because, in queer proximity, there are some commodities of market-day in the shape of living ducks and dead poultry,) I interpreted to represent the spirits of Johnson's father and mother, lending what aid they could to lighten his half-century's burden of remorse.

I had never heard of the above-described piece of sculpture before; it appears to have no reputation as a work of art, nor am I at all positive that it deserves any. For me, however, it did as much as sculpture could, under the circumstances, even if the artist of the Libyan Sibyl had

wrought it, by reviving my interest in the sturdy old Englishman, and particularly by freshening my perception of a wonderful beauty and pathetic tenderness in the incident of the penance. So, the next day, I left Lichfield for Uttoxeter, on one of the few purely sentimental pilgrimages that I ever undertook, to see the very spot where Johnson had stood. Boswell, I think, speaks of the town (its name is pronounced Yuteoxeter) as being about nine miles off from Lichfield, but the county-map would indicate a greater distance; and by rail, passing from one line to another, it is as much as eighteen miles. I have always had an idea of old Michael Johnson sending his literary merchandise by carrier's waggon, journeying to Uttoxeter a-foot on market-day morning, selling books through the busy hours, and returning to Lichfield at night. This could not possibly have been the case.

Arriving at the Uttoxeter station, the first objects that I saw, with a green field or two between them and me, were the tower and gray steeple of a church, rising among red-tiled roofs and a few scattered trees. A very short walk takes you from the station up into the town. It

had been my previous impression that the market-place of Uttoxeter lay immediately roundabout the church; and, if I remember the narrative aright, Johnson, or Boswell in his behalf, describes his father's book-stall as standing in the market-place, close behind the sacred edifice. It is impossible for me to say what changes may have occurred in the topography of the town, during almost a century and a half since Michael Johnson retired from business, and ninety years, at least, since his son's penance was performed. But the church has now merely a street of ordinary width passing around it, while the market-place, though near at hand, neither forms a part of it nor is really contiguous, nor would its throng and bustle be apt to overflow their boundaries and surge against the churchyard and the old gray tower. Nevertheless, a walk of a minute or two brings a person from the centre of the market-place to the church-door; and Michael Johnson might very conveniently have located his stall and laid out his literary ware in the corner at the tower's base; better there, indeed, than in the busy centre of an agricultural market. But the picturesque arrangement and full impressiveness of the story absolutely require

that Johnson shall not have done his penance in a corner, ever so little retired, but shall have been the very nucleus of the crowd—the midmost man of the market-place—a central image of Memory and Remorse, contrasting with and overpowering the petty materialism around him. He himself, having the force to throw vitality and truth into what persons differently constituted might reckon a mere external ceremony, and an absurd one, could not have failed to see this necessity. I am resolved, therefore, that the true site of Dr. Johnson's penance was in the middle of the market-place.

That important portion of the town is a rather spacious and irregularly shaped vacuity, surrounded by houses and shops, some of them old, with red-tiled roofs, others wearing a pretence of newness, but probably as old in their inner substance as the rest. The people of Uttoxeter seemed very idle in the warm summer-day, and were scattered in little groups along the side-walks, leisurely chatting with one another, and often turning about to take a deliberate stare at my humble self; insomuch that I felt as if my genuine sympathy for the illustrious penitent, and my many reflections about him, must have imbued me

with some of his own singularity of mien. If their great-grandfathers were such redoubtable starers in the doctor's day, his penance was no light one. This curiosity indicates a paucity of visitors to the little town, except for market purposes, and I question if Uttoxeter ever saw an American before. The only other thing that greatly impressed me was the abundance of public-houses, one at every step or two: Red Lions, White Harts, Bulls' Heads, Mitres, Cross Keys, and I know not what besides. These are probably for the accommodation of the farmers and peasantry of the neighbourhood on market-day, and content themselves with a very meagre business on other days of the week. At any rate, I was the only guest in Uttoxeter at the period of my visit, and had but an infinitesimal portion of patronage to distribute among such a multitude of inns. The reader, however, will possibly be scandalized to learn what was the first, and, indeed, the only important affair that I attended to, after coming so far to indulge a solemn and high emotion, and standing now on the very spot where my pious errand should have been consummated. I stepped into one of the rustic hostelries and got my dinner,

—bacon and greens, some mutton chops, juicier and more delectable than all America could serve up at the President's table, and a gooseberry pudding: a sufficient meal for six yeomen, and good enough for a prince, besides a pitcher of foaming ale, the whole at the pitiful small charge of eighteenpence!

Dr. Johnson would have forgiven me, for nobody had a heartier faith in beef and mutton than himself. And as regards my lack of sentiment in eating my dinner,—it was the wisest thing I had done that day. A sensible man had better not let himself be betrayed into these attempts to realize the things which he has dreamed about, and which, when they cease to be purely ideal in his mind, will have lost the truest of their truth, the loftiest and profoundest part of their power over his sympathies. Facts, as we really find them, whatever poetry they may involve, are covered with a stony excrescence of prose, resembling the crust on a beautiful sea-shell, and they never show their most delicate and divinest colours until we shall have dissolved away their grosser actualities by steeping them long in a powerful menstruum of thought. And seeking to actualize them again,

we do but renew the crust. If this were otherwise—if the moral sublimity of a great fact depended in any degree on its garb of external circumstances, things which change and decay—it could not itself be immortal and ubiquitous, and only a brief point of time and a little neighbourhood would be spiritually nourished by its grandeur and beauty.

Such were a few of the reflections which I mingled with my ale, as I remember to have seen an old quaffer of that excellent liquor stir up his cup with a sprig of some bitter and fragrant herb. Meanwhile I found myself still haunted by a desire to get a definite result out of my visit to Uttoxeter. The hospitable inn was called the Nag's Head, and, standing beside the market-place, was as likely as any other to have entertained old Michael Johnson in the days when he used to come hither to sell books. He, perhaps, had dined on bacon and greens, and drunk his ale, and smoked his pipe, in the very room where I now sat, which was a low, ancient room, certainly much older than Queen Anne's time, with a red-brick floor, and a white-washed ceiling, traversed by bare, rough beams, the whole in the rudest

fashion, but extremely neat. Neither did it lack ornament, the walls being hung with coloured engravings of prize oxen and other pretty prints, and the mantel-piece adorned with earthenware figures of shepherdesses in the Arcadian taste of long ago. Michael Johnson's eyes might have rested on that self-same earthen image, to examine which more closely I had just crossed the brick pavement of the room. And, sitting down again, still as I sipped my ale, I glanced through the open window into the sunny market-place, and wished that I could honestly fix on one spot rather than another as likely to have been the holy site where Johnson stood to do his penance.

How strange and stupid it is that tradition should not have marked and kept in mind the very place! How shameful (nothing less than that) that there should be no local memorial of this incident, as beautiful and touching a passage as can be cited out of any human life! No inscription of it, almost as sacred as a verse of Scripture on the wall of the church! No statue of the venerable and illustrious penitent in the market-place to throw a wholesome awe over its earthliness, its frauds and petty wrongs of which the

benumbed fingers of conscience can make no record, its selfish competition of each man with his brother or his neighbour, its traffic of soul-substance for a little worldly gain! Such a statue, if the piety of the people did not raise it, might almost have been expected to grow up out of the pavement of its own accord on the spot that had been watered by the rain that dripped from Johnson's garments, mingled with his remorseful tears.

Long after my visit to Uttoxeter, I was told that there were individuals in the town who could have shown me the exact, indubitable spot where Johnson performed his penance. I was assured, moreover, that sufficient interest was felt in the subject to have induced certain local discussions as to the expediency of erecting a memorial. With all deference to my polite informant, I surmise that there is a mistake, and decline, without further and precise evidence, giving credit to either of the above statements. The inhabitants know nothing, as a matter of general interest, about the penance, and care nothing for the scene of it. If the clergyman of the parish, for example, had ever heard of it, would he not have used the theme, time and

again, wherewith to work tenderly and profoundly on the souls committed to his charge? If parents were familiar with it, would they not teach it to their young ones at the fireside, both to insure reverence to their own gray hairs, and to protect the children from such unavailing regrets as Johnson bore upon his heart for fifty years? If the site were ascertained, would not the pavement thereabouts be worn with reverential footsteps? Would not every town-born child be able to direct the pilgrim thither? While waiting at the station, before my departure, I asked a boy who stood near me,—an intelligent and gentlemanly lad, twelve or thirteen years old, whom I should take to be a clergyman's son,—I asked him if he had ever heard the story of Dr. Johnson, how he stood an hour doing penance near that church, the spire of which rose before us. The boy stared and answered,—

"No!"

"Were you born in Uttoxeter?"

"Yes."

I inquired if no circumstance such as I had mentioned was known or talked about among the inhabitants.

"No," said the boy; "not that I ever heard of."

Just think of the absurd little town knowing nothing of the only memorable incident which ever happened within its boundaries since the old Britons built it, this sad and lovely story, which consecrates the spot (for I found it holy to my contemplation again, as soon as it lay behind me) in the heart of a stranger from three thousand miles over the sea! It but confirms what I have been saying, that sublime and beautiful facts are best understood when etherealized by distance.

PILGRIMAGE TO OLD BOSTON.

We set out at a little past eleven, and made our first stage to Manchester. We were by this time sufficiently Anglicized to reckon the morning a bright and sunny one; although the May sunshine was mingled with water, as it were, and distempered with a very bitter east wind.

Lancashire is a dreary county (all, at least, except its hilly portions), and I have never passed through it without wishing myself anywhere but in that particular spot where I then happened to be. A few places along our route were historically interesting; as, for example, Bolton, which was the scene of many remarkable events in the Parliamentary war, and in the market-square of which one of the Earls of Derby was beheaded. We saw, along the wayside, the never-failing green fields, hedges, and other mono-

tonous features of an ordinary English landscape. There were little factory villages, too, or larger towns, with their tall chimneys, and their pennons of black smoke, their ugliness of brickwork, and their heaps of refuse matter from the furnace, which seems to be the only kind of stuff which Nature cannot take back to herself and resolve into the elements, when man has thrown it aside. These hillocks of waste and effete mineral always disfigure the neighbourhood of ironmongering towns, and, even after a considerable antiquity, are hardly made decent with a little grass.

At a quarter to two we left Manchester by the Sheffield and Lincoln Railway. The scenery grew rather better than that through which we had hitherto passed, though still by no means very striking; for (except in the show districts, such as the Lake country, or Derbyshire) English scenery is not particularly well worth looking at, considered as a spectacle or a picture. It has a real, homely charm of its own, no doubt; and the rich verdure, and the thorough finish added by human art, are perhaps as attractive to an American eye as any stronger feature could be. Our journey, however, between Manchester and

Sheffield was not through a rich tract of country, but along a valley walled in by bleak, ridgy hills extending straight as a rampart, and across black moorlands with here and there a plantation of trees. Sometimes there were long and gradual ascents, bleak, windy, and desolate, conveying the very impression which the reader gets from many passages of Miss Brontë's novels, and still more from those of her two sisters. Old stone or brick farm-houses, and, once in a while, an old church tower, were visible; but these are almost too common objects to be noticed in an English landscape.

On a railway, I suspect, what little we do see of the country is seen quite amiss, because it was never intended to be looked at from any point of view in that straight line; so that it is like looking at the wrong side of a piece of tapestry. The old highways and footpaths were as natural as brooks and rivulets, and adapted themselves by an inevitable impulse to the physiognomy of the country; and, furthermore, every object within view of them had some subtile reference to their curves and undulations: but the line of a railway is perfectly artificial, and puts all precedent things

at sixes-and-sevens. At any rate, be the cause what it may, there is seldom anything worth seeing within the scope of a railway traveller's eye; and if there were, it requires an alert marksman to take a flying shot at the picturesque.

At one of the stations (it was near a village of ancient aspect, nestling round a church, on a wide Yorkshire moor) I saw a tall old lady in black, who seemed to have just alighted from the train. She caught my attention by a singular movement of the head, not once only, but continually repeated, and at regular intervals, as if she were making a stern and solemn protest against some action that developed itself before her eyes, and were foreboding terrible disaster, if it should be persisted in. Of course, it was nothing more than a paralytic or nervous affection; yet one might fancy that it had its origin in some unspeakable wrong, perpetrated half a lifetime ago in this old gentlewoman's presence, either against herself or somebody whom she loved still better. Her features had a wonderful sternness, which, I presume, was caused by her habitual effort to compose and keep them quiet, and thereby counteract the tendency to paralytic movement. The

slow, regular, and inexorable character of the motion—her look of force and self-control, which had the appearance of rendering it voluntary, while yet it was so fateful—have stamped this poor lady's face and gesture into my memory; so that, some dark day or other, I am afraid she will reproduce herself in a dismal romance.

The train stopped a minute or two, to allow the tickets to be taken, just before entering the Sheffield station, and thence I had a glimpse of the famous town of razors and penknives, enveloped in a cloud of its own diffusing. My impressions of it are extremely vague and misty, —or, rather, smoky: for Sheffield seems to me smokier than Manchester, Liverpool, or Birmingham,—smokier than all England besides, unless Newcastle be the exception. It might have been Pluto's own metropolis, shrouded in sulphurous vapour; and, indeed, our approach to it had been by the Valley of the Shadow of Death, through a tunnel three miles in length, quite traversing the breadth and depth of a mountainous hill.

After passing Sheffield, the scenery became softer, gentler, yet more picturesque. At one point we saw what I believe to be the utmost

northern verge of Sherwood Forest,—not consisting, however, of thousand-year oaks, extant from Robin Hood's days, but of young and thriving plantations, which will require a century or two of slow English growth to give them much breadth of shade. Earl Fitzwilliam's property lies in this neighbourhood, and probably his castle was hidden among some soft depth of foliage not far off. Farther onward the country grew quite level around us, whereby I judged that we must now be in Lincolnshire; and shortly after six o'clock we caught the first glimpse of the cathedral towers, though they loomed scarcely huge enough for our preconceived idea of them. But, as we drew nearer, the great edifice began to assert itself, making us acknowledge it to be larger than our receptivity could take in.

At the railway-station we found no cab, (it being an unknown vehicle in Lincoln,) but only an omnibus belonging to the Saracen's Head, which the driver recommended as the best hotel in the city, and took us thither accordingly. It received us hospitably, and looked comfortable enough; though, like the hotels of most old English towns, it had a musty fragrance of antiquity,

such as I have smelt in a seldom opened London church where the broad-aisle is paved with tombstones. The house was of an ancient fashion, the entrance into its interior court-yard being through an arch, in the side of which is the door of the hotel. There are long corridors, an intricate arrangement of passages, and an up-and-down meandering of staircases, amid which it would be no marvel to encounter some forgotten guest who had gone astray a hundred years ago, and was still seeking for his bedroom while the rest of his generation were in their graves. There is no exaggerating the confusion of mind that seizes upon a stranger in the bewildering geography of a great old-fashioned English inn.

This hotel stands in the principal street of Lincoln, and within a very short distance of one of the ancient city gates, which is arched across the public way, with a smaller arch for foot-passengers on either side; the whole, a gray, time-gnawn, ponderous, shadowy structure, through the dark vista of which you look into the Middle Ages. The street is narrow, and retains many antique peculiarities; though, unquestionably, English domestic architecture has lost its most

impressive features, in the course of the last century. In this respect, there are finer old towns than Lincoln: Chester, for instance, and Shrewsbury,—which last is unusually rich in those quaint and stately edifices where the gentry of the shire used to make their winter abodes, in a provincial metropolis. Almost everywhere, now-a-days, there is a monotony of modern brick or stuccoed fronts, hiding houses that are older than ever, but obliterating the picturesque antiquity of the street.

Between seven and eight o'clock (it being still broad daylight in these long English days) we set out to pay a preliminary visit to the exterior of the cathedral. Passing through the Stone Bow, as the city-gate close by is called, we ascended a street which grew steeper and narrower as we advanced, till at last it got to be the steepest street I ever climbed,—so steep that any carriage, if left to itself, would rattle downward much faster than it could possibly be drawn up. Being almost the only hill in Lincolnshire, the inhabitants seem disposed to make the most of it. The houses on each side had no very remarkable aspect, except one with a stone portal and carved ornaments, which

is now a dwelling-place for poverty-stricken people, but may have been an aristocratic abode in the days of the Norman kings, to whom its style of architecture dates back. This is called the Jewess's House, having been inhabited by a woman of that faith who was hanged six hundred years ago.

And still the street grew steeper and steeper. Certainly, the bishop and clergy of Lincoln ought not to be fat men, but of very spiritual, saint-like, almost angelic habit, if it be a frequent part of their ecclesiastical duty to climb this hill; for it is a real penance, and was probably performed as such, and groaned over accordingly, in monkish times. Formerly, on the day of his installation, the bishop used to ascend the hill barefoot, and was doubtless cheered and invigorated by looking upward to the grandeur that was to console him for the humility of his approach. We, likewise, were beckoned onward by glimpses of the cathedral towers, and, finally attaining an open square on the summit, we saw an old Gothic gateway to the left hand, and another to the right. The latter had apparently been a part of the exterior defences of the cathedral, at a time when the edifice was fortified. The west front rose behind.

We passed through one of the side-arches of the Gothic portal, and found ourselves in the Cathedral Close, a wide, level space, where the great old minster has fair room to sit, looking down on the ancient structures that surround it, all of which, in former days, were the habitations of its dignitaries and officers. Some of them are still occupied as such, though others are in too neglected and dilapidated a state to seem worthy of so splendid an establishment. Unless it be Salisbury Close, however, (which is incomparably rich as regards the old residences that belong to it,) I remember no more comfortably picturesque precincts round any other cathedral. But, in truth, almost every cathedral close, in turn, has seemed to me the loveliest, cosiest, safest, least wind-shaken, most decorous, and most enjoyable shelter that ever the thrift and selfishness of mortal man contrived for himself. How delightful, to combine all this with the service of the temple!

Lincoln Cathedral is built of a yellowish brownstone, which appears either to have been largely restored, or else does not assume the hoary, crumbly surface that gives such a venerable aspect to most of the ancient churches and castles

in England. In many parts, the recent restorations are quite evident; but other, and much the larger, portions can scarcely have been touched for centuries: for there are still the gargoyles, perfect, or with broken noses, as the case may be, but showing that variety and fertility of grotesque extravagance which no modern imitation can effect. There are innumerable niches, too, up the whole height of the towers, above and around the entrance, and all over the walls: most of them empty, but a few containing the lamentable remnants of headless saints and angels. It is singular what a native animosity lives in the human heart against carved images, insomuch that, whether they represent Christian saint or Pagan deity, all unsophisticated men seize the first safe opportunity to knock off their heads! In spite of all dilapidations, however, the effect of the west front of the cathedral is still exceedingly rich, being covered from massive base to airy summit with the minutest details of sculpture and carving: at least it was so once; and even now the spiritual impression of its beauty remains so strong, that we have to look twice to see that much of it has been obliterated. I have seen a cherry-stone carved all

over by a monk, so minutely that it must have cost him half a lifetime of labour; and this cathedral front seems to have been elaborated in a monkish spirit, like that cherry-stone. Not that the result is in the least petty, but miraculously grand, and all the more so for the faithful beauty of the smallest details.

An elderly man, seeing us looking up at the west front, came to the door of an adjacent house, and called to inquire if we wished to go into the cathedral; but as there would have been a dusky twilight beneath its roof, like the antiquity that has sheltered itself within, we declined for the present. So we merely walked round the exterior, and thought it more beautiful than that of York; though, on recollection, I hardly deem it so majestic and mighty as that. It is vain to attempt a description, or seek even to record the feeling which the edifice inspires. It does not impress the beholder as an inanimate object, but as something that has a vast, quiet, long-enduring life of its own—a creation which man did not build, though in some way or other it is connected with him, and kindred to human nature. In short, I fall straightway to talking nonsense, when I try

to express my inner sense of this and other cathedrals.

While we stood in the close, at the eastern end of the minster, the clock chimed the quarters; and then Great Tom, who hangs in the Rood Tower, told us it was eight o'clock, in far the sweetiest and mightiest accents that I ever heard from any bell,—slow, and solemn, and allowing the profound reverberations of each stroke to die away before the next one fell. It was still broad daylight in that upper region of the town, and would be so for some time longer; but the evening atmosphere was getting sharp and cool. We therefore descended the steep street,—our younger companion running before us, and gathering such headway that I fully expected him to break his head against some projecting wall.

In the morning we took a fly (an English term for an exceedingly sluggish vehicle), and drove up to the minster by a road rather less steep and abrupt than the one we had previously climbed. We alighted before the west front, and sent our charioteer in quest of the verger; but, as he was not immediately to be found, a young girl let us into the nave. We found it very

grand, it is needless to say, but not so grand, methought, as the vast nave of York Cathedral, especially beneath the great central tower of the latter. Unless a writer intends a professedly architectural description, there is but one set of phrases in which to talk of all the cathedrals in England, and elsewhere. They are alike in their great features: an acre or two of stone flags for a pavement; rows of vast columns supporting a vaulted roof at a dusky height; great windows, sometimes richly bedimmed with ancient or modern stained glass; and an elaborately carved screen between the nave and chancel, breaking the vista that might else be of such glorious length, and which is further choked up by a massive organ, —in spite of which obstructions you catch the broad, variegated glimmer of the painted east window, where a hundred saints wear their robes of transfiguration. Behind the screen are the carved oaken stalls of the chapter and prebendaries, the bishop's throne, the pulpit, the altar, and whatever else may furnish out the Holy of Holies. Nor must we forget the range of chapels (once dedicated to Catholic saints, but which have now lost their individual consecration), nor the

old monuments of kings, warriors, and prelates, in the side aisles of the chancel. In close contiguity to the main body of the cathedral is the chapter-house, which, here at Lincoln, as at Salisbury, is supported by one central pillar rising from the floor, and putting forth branches like a tree, to hold up the roof. Adjacent to the chapter-house are the cloisters, extending round a quadrangle, and paved with lettered tombstones, the more antique of which have had their inscriptions half obliterated by the feet of monks taking their noontide exercise in these sheltered walks, five hundred years ago. Some of these old burial-stones, although with ancient crosses engraved upon them, have been made to serve as memorials to dead people of very recent date.

In the chancel, among the tombs of forgotten bishops and knights, we saw an immense slab of stone purporting to be the monument of Catherine Swineferd, wife of John of Gaunt; also, here was the shrine of the little Saint Hugh, that Christian child who was fabled to have been crucified by the Jews of Lincoln. The cathedral is not particularly rich in monuments; for it suffered grievous out-

rage and dilapidation, both at the Reformation and in Cromwell's time. This latter iconoclast is in especially bad odour with the sextons and vergers of most of the old churches which I have visited. His soldiers stabled their steeds in the nave of Lincoln Cathedral, and hacked and hewed the monkish sculptures, and the ancestral memorials of great families, quite at their wicked and plebeian pleasure. Nevertheless, there are some most exquisite and marvellous specimens of flowers, foliage, and grape-vines, and miracles of stone-work twined about arches, as if the material had been as soft as wax in the cunning sculptor's hands,—the leaves being represented with all their veins, so that you would almost think it petrified Nature, for which he sought to steal the praise of art. Here, too, were those grotesque faces which always grin at you from the projections of monkish architecture, as if the builders had gone mad with their own deep solemnity, or dreaded such a catastrophe, unless permitted to throw in something ineffably absurd.

Originally, it is supposed, all the pillars of this great edifice, and all these magic sculptures, were polished to the utmost degree of lustre; nor is it

unreasonable to think that the artists would have taken these further pains, when they had already bestowed so much labour in working out their conceptions to the extremest point. But, at present, the whole interior of the cathedral is smeared over with a yellowish wash, the very meanest hue imaginable, and for which somebody's soul has a bitter reckoning to undergo.

In the centre of the grassy quadrangle about which the cloisters perambulate, is a small, mean, brick building, with a locked door. Our guide,—I forgot to say that we had been captured by a verger, in black, and with a white tie, but of a lusty and jolly aspect,—our guide unlocked this door, and disclosed a flight of steps. At the bottom appeared what I should have taken to be a large square of dim, worn, and faded oil-carpeting, which might originally have been painted of a rather gaudy pattern. This was a Roman tessellated pavement, made of small coloured bricks, or pieces of burnt clay. It was accidentally discovered here, and has not been meddled with further than by removing the superincumbent earth and rubbish.

Nothing else occurs to me, just now, to be

recorded about the interior of the cathedral, except that we saw a place where the stone pavement had been worn away by the feet of ancient pilgrims scraping upon it, as they knelt down before a shrine of the Virgin.

Leaving the minster, we now went along a street of more venerable appearance than we had heretofore seen, bordered with houses, the high, peaked roofs of which were covered with red earthen tiles. It led us to a Roman arch, which was once the gateway of a fortification, and has been striding across the English street ever since the latter was a faint village path, and for centuries before. The arch is about four hundred yards from the cathedral; and it is to be noticed that there are Roman remains in all this neighbourhood, some above ground, and doubtless innumerably more beneath it; for, as in ancient Rome itself, an inundation of accumulated soil seems to have swept over what was the surface of that earlier day. The gateway which I am speaking about is probably buried to a third of its height, and perhaps has as perfect a Roman pavement (if sought for at the original depth) as that which runs beneath the Arch of Titus. It is a rude and

massive structure, and seems as stalwart now as it could have been two thousand years ago; and though Time has gnawed it externally, he has made what amends he could by crowning its rough and broken summit with grass and weeds, and planting tufts of yellow flowers on the projections up and down the sides.

There are the ruins of a Norman castle, built by the Conqueror, in pretty close proximity to the cathedral; but the old gateway is obstructed by a modern door of wood, and we were denied admittance because some part of the precincts are used as a prison. We now rambled about on the broad back of the hill, which, besides the minster and ruined castle, is the site of some stately and queer old houses, and of many mean little hovels. I suspect that all or most of the life of the present day has subsided into the lower town, and that only priests, poor people, and prisoners dwell in these upper regions. In the wide, dry moat at the base of the castle-wall are clustered whole colonies of small houses, some of brick, but the larger portion built of old stones which once made part of the Norman keep, or of Roman structures that existed before the Con-

queror's castle was ever dreamed about. They are like toadstools that spring up from the mould of a decaying tree. Ugly as they are, they add wonderfully to the picturesqueness of the scene, being quite as valuable, in that respect, as the great, broad, ponderous ruin of the castle-keep, which rose high above our heads, heaving its huge gray mass out of a bank of green foliage and ornamental shrubbery, such as lilacs and other flowering plants, in which its foundations were completely hidden.

After walking quite round the castle, I made an excursion through the Roman gateway, along a pleasant and level road bordered with dwellings of various character. One or two were houses of gentility, with delightful and shadowy lawns before them; many had those high, red-tiled roofs, ascending into acutely pointed gables, which seem to belong to the same epoch as some of the edifices in our own earlier towns; and there were pleasant-looking cottages, very sylvan and rural, with hedges so dense and high, fencing them in as almost to hide them up to the eaves of their thatched roofs. In front of one of these I saw various images, crosses, and relics of antiquity,

among which were fragments of old Catholic tombstones, disposed by way of ornament.

We now went home to the Saracen's Head; and as the weather was very unpropitious, and it sprinkled a little now and then, I would gladly have felt myself released from further thraldom to the cathedral. But it had taken possession of me, and would not let me be at rest; so at length I found myself compelled to climb the hill again, between daylight and dusk. A mist was now hovering about the upper height of the great central tower, so as to dim and half obliterate its battlements and pinnacles, even while I stood in the close beneath it. It was the most impressive view that I had had. The whole lower part of the structure was seen with perfect distinctness; but at the very summit the mist was so dense as to form an actual cloud, as well defined as ever I saw resting on a mountain-top. Really and literally, here was a "cloud-capt tower."

The entire cathedral, too, transfigured itself into a richer beauty and more imposing majesty than ever. The longer I looked, the better I loved it. Its exterior is certainly far more beautiful than that of York Minster: and its finer

effect is due, I think, to the many peaks in which the structure ascends, and to the pinnacles which, as it were, repeat and re-echo them into the sky. York Cathedral is comparatively square and angular in its general effect; but in this at Lincoln there is a continual mystery of variety, so that at every glance you are aware of a change, and a disclosure of something new, yet working an harmonious development of what you have heretofore seen. The west front is unspeakably grand, and may be read over and over again for ever, and still show undetected meanings, like a great, broad page of marvellous writing in black-letter,—so many sculptured ornaments there are, blossoming out before your eyes, and gray statues that have grown there since you looked last, and empty niches, and a hundred airy canopies beneath which carved images used to be, and where they will show themselves again, if you gaze long enough.—But I will not say another word about the cathedral.

We spent the rest of the day within the sombre precincts of the Saracen's Head, reading yesterday's *Times*, *The Guide Book of Lincoln*, and *The Directory of the Eastern Counties*. Dismal as the weather was, the street beneath our window was

enlivened with a great bustle and turmoil of people all the evening, because it was Saturday night, and they had accomplished their week's toil, received their wages, and were making their small purchases against Sunday, and enjoying themselves as well as they knew how. A band of music passed to and fro several times, with the raindrops falling into the mouth of the brazen trumpet and pattering on the bass-drum; a spirit-shop, opposite the hotel, had a vast run of custom; and a coffee-dealer, in the open air, found occasional vent for his commodity, in spite of the cold water that dripped into the cups. The whole breadth of the street, between the Stone Bow and the bridge across the Witham, was thronged to overflowing, and humming with human life.

Observing in the *Guide Book* that a steamer runs on the river Witham between Lincoln and Boston, I inquired of the waiter, and learned that she was to start on Monday at ten o'clock. Thinking it might be an interesting trip, and a pleasant variation of our customary mode of travel, we determined to make the voyage. The Witham flows through Lincoln, crossing the main street under an arched bridge of Gothic construction

a little below the Saracen's Head. It has more the appearance of a canal than of a river, in its passage through the town—being bordered with hewn stone masonwork on each side, and provided with one or two locks. The steamer proved to be small, dirty, and altogether inconvenient. The early morning had been bright; but the sky now lowered upon us with a sulky English temper, and we had not long put off before we felt an ugly wind from the German Ocean blowing right in our teeth. There were a number of passengers on board, country-people, such as travel by third class on the railway; for, I suppose, nobody but ourselves ever dreamt of voyaging by the steamer for the sake of what he might happen upon in the way of river scenery.

We bothered a good while about getting through a preliminary lock; nor, when fairly under way, did we ever accomplish, I think, six miles an hour. Constant delays were caused, moreover, by stopping to take up passengers and freight,—not at regular landing-places, but anywhere along the green banks. The scenery was identical with that of the railway, because the latter runs along by the river-side through the whole distance,

or nowhere departs from it except to make a short cut across some sinuosity; so that our only advantage lay in the drawling, snail-like slothfulness of our progress, which allowed us time enough and to spare for the objects along the shore. Unfortunately, there was nothing, or next to nothing, to be seen,—the country being one unvaried level over the whole thirty miles of our voyage,—not a hill in sight, either near or far, except that solitary one on the summit of which we had left Lincoln Cathedral. And the cathedral was our landmark for four hours or more, and at last rather faded out than was hidden by any intervening object.

It would have been a pleasantly lazy day enough, if the rough and bitter wind had not blown directly in our faces, and chilled us through, in spite of the sunshine that soon succeeded a sprinkle or two of rain. These English east winds, which prevail from February till June, are greater nuisances than the east wind of our own Atlantic coast, although they do not bring mist and storm, as with us, but some of the sunniest weather that England sees. Under their influence, the sky smiles and is villanous.

The landscape was tame to the last degree, but had an English character that was abundantly worth our looking at. A green luxuriance of early grass; old, high-roofed farmhouses, surrounded by their stone barns and ricks of hay and grain; ancient villages, with the square, gray tower of a church seen afar over the level country, amid the cluster of red roofs; here and there a shadowy grove of venerable trees, surrounding what was perhaps an Elizabethan hall, though it looked more like the abode of some rich yeoman. Once, too, we saw the tower of a mediæval castle, that of Tattershall, built by a Cromwell, but whether of the Protector's family I cannot tell. But the gentry do not appear to have settled multitudinously in this tract of country; nor is it to be wondered at, since a lover of the picturesque would as soon think of settling in Holland. The river retains its canal-like aspect all along; and only in the latter part of its course does it become more than wide enough for the little steamer to turn itself round,—at broadest, not more than twice that width.

The only memorable incident of our voyage happened when a mother-duck was leading her

little fleet of five ducklings across the river, just as our steamer went swaggering by, stirring the quiet stream into great waves that lashed the banks on either side. I saw the imminence of the catastrophe, and hurried to the stern of the boat to witness its consummation, since I could not possibly avert it. The poor ducklings had uttered their baby-quacks, and striven with all their tiny might to escape: four of them, I believe, were washed aside and thrown off unhurt from the steamer's prow; but the fifth must have gone under the whole length of the keel, and never could have come up alive.

At last in mid-afternoon, we beheld the tall tower of Saint Botolph's Church (three hundred feet high, the same elevation as the tallest tower of Lincoln Cathedral) looming in the distance. At about half-past four we reached Boston, (which name has been shortened, in the course of ages, by the quick and slovenly English pronunciation, from Botolph's town,) and were taken by a cab to the Peacock, in the market-place. It was the best hotel in town, though a poor one enough; and we were shown into a small, stifled parlour, dingy, musty, and scented with stale tobacco smoke,—

tobacco smoke two days old, for the waiter assured us that the room had not more recently been fumigated. An exceedingly grim waiter he was, apparently a genuine descendant of the old Puritans of this English Boston, and quite as sour as those who people the daughter-city in New England. Our parlour had the one recommendation of looking into the market-place, and affording a sidelong glimpse of the tall spire and noble old church.

In my first ramble about the town, chance led me to the river-side, at that quarter where the port is situated. Here were long buildings of an old-fashioned aspect, seemingly warehouses, with windows in the high, steep roofs. The custom-house found ample accommodation within an ordinary dwelling-house. Two or three large schooners were moored along the river's brink, which had here a stone margin; another large and handsome schooner was evidently just finished, rigged and equipped for her first voyage; the rudiments of another were on the stocks, in a shipyard bordering on the river. Still another, while I was looking on, came up the stream, and lowered her mainsail, from a foreign voyage. An old man on the bank hailed her and inquired about her cargo;

but the Lincolnshire people have such a queer way of talking English that I could not understand the reply. Farther down the river, I saw a brig, approaching rapidly under sail. The whole scene made an odd impression of bustle, and sluggishness, and decay, and a remnant of wholesome life; and I could not but contrast it with the mighty and populous activity of our own Boston, which was once the feeble infant of this old English town;—the latter, perhaps, almost stationary ever since that day, as if the birth of such an offspring had taken away its own principle of growth. I thought of Long Wharf, and Faneuil Hall, and Washington Street, and the Great Elm, and the State House, and exulted lustily,—but yet began to feel at home in this good old town, for its very name's sake, as I never had before felt, in England.

The next morning we came out in the early sunshine, (the sun must have been shining nearly four hours, however, for it was after eight o'clock,) and strolled about the streets, like people who had a right to be there. The market-place of Boston is an irregular square, into one end of which the chancel of the church slightly projects. The gates of the churchyard were open and free to all pas-

sengers, and the common footway of the townspeople seems to lie to and fro across it. It is paved, according to English custom, with flat tombstones; and there are also raised or altar tombs, some of which have armorial bearings on them. One clergyman has caused himself and his wife to be buried right in the middle of the stone-bordered path that traverses the churchyard; so that not an individual of the thousands who pass along this public way can help trampling over him or her. The scene, nevertheless, was very cheerful in the morning sun: people going about their business in the day's primal freshness, which was just as fresh here as in younger villages; children, with milk-pails, loitering over the burial stones; school-boys playing leap-frog with the altar tombs; the simple old town preparing itself for the day, which would be like myriads of other days that had passed over it, but yet would be worth living through. And down on the churchyard, where were buried many generations whom it remembered in their time, looked the stately tower of Saint Botolph; and it was good to see and think of such an age-long giant, intermarrying the present epoch with a distant past, and

getting quite imbued with human nature by being so immemorially connected with men's familiar knowledge and homely interests. It is a noble tower; and the jackdaws evidently have pleasant homes in their hereditary nests among its topmost windows, and live delightful lives, flitting and cawing about its pinnacles and flying buttresses. I should almost like to be a jackdaw myself, for the sake of living up there.

In front of the church, not more than twenty yards off, and with a low brick wall between, flows the river Witham. On the hither bank a fisherman was washing his boat; and another skiff, with her sail lazily half-twisted, lay on the opposite strand. The stream, at this point, is about of such width that if the tall tower were to tumble over the flat on its face, its top-stone might perhaps reach the middle of the channel. On the farther shore there is a line of antique-looking houses, with roofs of red tile, and windows opening out of them, —some of these dwellings being so ancient that the Reverend Mr. Cotton, subsequently our first Boston minister, must have seen them with his own bodily eyes when he used to issue from the front portal after service. Indeed, there must be

very many houses here, and even some streets, that bear much the aspect that they did when the Puritan divine paced solemnly among them.

In our rambles about town, we went into a bookseller's shop to inquire if he had any description of Boston for sale. He offered me (or, rather, produced for inspection, not supposing that I would buy it,) a quarto history of the town, published by subscription, nearly forty years ago. The bookseller showed himself a well-informed and affable man, and a local antiquary, to whom a party of inquisitive strangers were a godsend. He had met with several Americans, who, at various times, had come on pilgrimages to this place, and he had been in correspondence with others. Happening to have heard the name of one member of our party, he showed us great courtesy and kindness, and invited us into his inner domicile, where, as he modestly intimated, he kept a few articles which it might interest us to see. So we went with him through the shop, up-stairs, into the private part of his establishment; and, really, it was one of the rarest adventures I ever met with, to stumble upon this treasure of a man, with his treasury of antiquities and curiosities

veiled behind the unostentatious front of a bookseller's shop, in a very moderate line of village business. The two upstair rooms into which he introduced us were so crowded with inestimable articles, that we were almost afraid to stir, for fear of breaking some fragile thing that had been accumulating value for unknown centuries.

The apartment was hung round with pictures and old engravings, many of which were extremely rare. Premising that he was going to show us something very curious, Mr. Porter went into the next room and returned with a counterpane of fine linen, elaborately embroidered with silk, which so profusely covered the linen that the general effect was as if the main texture were silken. It was stained, and seemed very old, and had an ancient fragrance. It was wrought all over with birds and flowers in a most delicate style of needlework, and among other devices, more than once repeated, was the cipher, M.S.,—being the initials of one of the most unhappy names that ever a woman bore. This quilt was embroidered by the hands of Mary Queen of Scots, during her imprisonment at Fotheringay Castle; and having evidently been a work of years, she had doubtless

shed many tears over it, and wrought many doleful thoughts and abortive schemes into its texture, along with the birds and flowers. As a counterpart to this most precious relic, our friend produced some of the handiwork of a former Queen of Otaheite, presented by her to Captain Cook: it was a bag, cunningly made of some delicate vegetable stuff, and ornamented with feathers. Next, he brought out a green silk waistcoat of very antique fashion, trimmed about the edges and pocketholes with a rich and delicate embroidery of gold and silver. This (as the possessor of the treasure proved, by tracing its pedigree till it came into his hands) was once the vestment of Queen Elizabeth's Lord Burleigh: but that great statesman must have been a person of very moderate girth in the chest and waist; for the garment was hardly more than a comfortable fit for a boy of eleven, the smallest American of our party, who tried on the gorgeous waistcoat. Then, Mr. Porter produced some curiously engraved drinking-glasses, with a view of Saint Botolph's steeple on one of them, and other Boston edifices, public or domestic, on the remaining two, very admirably done. These crystal goblets had been a

present, long ago, to an old master of the Free School from his pupils; and it is very rarely, I imagine, that a retired schoolmaster can exhibit such trophies of gratitude and affection, won from the victims of his birch rod.

Our kind friend kept bringing out one unexpected and wholly unexpectable thing after another, as if he were a magician, and had only to fling a private signal into the air, and some attendant imp would hand forth any strange relic we might choose to ask for. He was especially rich in drawings by the Old Masters, producing two or three, of exquisite delicacy, by Raphael, one by Salvator, a head of Rembrandt, and others, in chalk or pen-and-ink, by Giordano, Benvenuto Cellini, and hands almost as famous; and besides what were shown us, there seemed to be an endless supply of these art-treasures in reserve. On the wall hung a crayon-portrait of Sterne, never engraved, representing him as a rather young man, blooming, and not uncomely: it was the worldly face of a man fond of pleasure, but without that ugly, keen, sarcastic, odd expression that we see in his only engraved portrait. The picture is an original, and must needs be very valuable; and

we wish it might be prefixed to some new and worthier biography of a writer whose character the world has always treated with singular harshness, considering how much it owes him. There was likewise a crayon-portrait of Sterne's wife, looking so haughty and unamiable that the wonder is, not that he ultimately left her, but how he ever contrived to live a week with such an awful woman.

After looking at these, and a great many more things than I can remember, above stairs, we went down to a parlour, where this wonderful bookseller opened an old cabinet, containing numberless drawers, and looking just fit to be the repository of such knick-knacks as were stored up in it. He appeared to possess more treasures than he himself knew of, or knew where to find; but, rummaging here and there, he brought forth things new and old: rose-nobles, Victoria crowns, gold angels, double-sovereigns of George IV., two-guinea pieces of George II.; a marriage medal of the first Napoleon, only forty-five of which were ever struck off, and of which even the British Museum does not contain a specimen like this, in gold; a brass medal, three or four

inches in diameter, of a Roman emperor; together with buckles, bracelets, amulets, and I know not what besides. There was a green silk tassel from the fringe of Queen Mary's bed at Holyrood Palace. There were illuminated missals, antique Latin Bibles, and (what may seem of especial interest to the historian) a Secret Book of Queen Elizabeth, in manuscript, written, for aught I know, by her own hand. On examination, however, it proved to contain, not secrets of state, but recipes for dishes, drinks, medicines, washes, and all such matters of housewifery, the toilet, and domestic quackery, among which we were horrified by the title of one of the nostrums, "How to kill a Fellow quickly!" We never doubted that bloody Queen Bess might often have had occasion for such a recipe, but wondered at her frankness, and at her attending to these anomalous necessities in such a methodical way. The truth is, we had read amiss, and the Queen had spelt amiss: the word was "Fellon,"—a sort of whitlow,—not "Fellow."

Our hospitable friend now made us drink a glass of wine, as old and genuine as the curiosities of his cabinet; and while sipping it, we ungrate-

fully tried to excite his envy, by telling of various things, interesting to an antiquary and virtuoso, which we had seen in the course of our travels about England. We spoke, for instance, of a missal bound in solid gold and set around with jewels, but of such intrinsic value as no setting could enhance, for it was exquisitely illuminated throughout, by the hand of Raphael himself. We mentioned a little silver case which once contained a portion of the heart of Louis XIV. nicely done up in spices, but, to the owner's horror and astonishment, Dean Buckland popped the kingly morsel into his mouth, and swallowed it. We told about the black-letter prayer-book of King Charles the Martyr, used by him upon the scaffold, taking which into our hands, it opened of itself at the Communion Service; and there, on the left-hand page, appeared a spot about as large as a sixpence, of a yellowish or brownish hue: a drop of the King's blood had fallen there.

Mr. Porter now accompanied us to the church, but first leading us to a vacant spot of ground where old John Cotton's vicarage had stood till a very short time since. According to our friend's description, it was a humble habitation, of the

cottage order, built of brick, with a thatched roof. The site is now rudely fenced in, and cultivated as a vegetable garden. In the right-hand aisle of the church there is an ancient chapel, which, at the time of our visit, was in process of restoration, and was to be dedicated to Mr. Cotton, whom these English people consider as the founder of our American Boston. It would contain a painted memorial-window, in honour of the old Puritan minister. A festival in commemoration of the event was to take place in the ensuing July, to which I had myself received an invitation, but I knew too well the pains and penalties incurred by an invited guest at public festivals in England to accept it. It ought to be recorded (and it seems to have made a very kindly impression on our kinsfolk here) that five hundred pounds had been contributed by persons in the United States, principally in Boston, towards the cost of the memorial-window, and the repair and restoration of the chapel.

After we emerged from the chapel, Mr. Porter approached us with the vicar, to whom he kindly introduced us, and then took his leave. May a stranger's benediction rest upon him! He is a

most pleasant man; rather, I imagine, a virtuoso than an antiquary; for he seemed to value the Queen of Otaheite's bag as highly as Queen Mary's embroidered quilt, and to have an omnivorous appetite for everything strange and rare. Would that we could fill up his shelves and drawers (if there are any vacant spaces left) with the choicest trifles that have dropped out of Time's carpet-bag, or give him the carpet-bag itself, to take out what he will!

The vicar looked about thirty years old, a gentleman, evidently assured of his position (as clergymen of the Established Church invariably are), comfortable and well-to-do, a scholar and a Christian, and fit to be a bishop, knowing how to make the most of life without prejudice to the life to come. I was glad to see such a model English priest so suitably accommodated with an old English church. He kindly and courteously did the honours, showing us quite round the interior, giving us all the information that we required, and then leaving us to the quiet enjoyment of what we came to see.

The interior of Saint Botolph's is very fine and satisfactory, as stately almost as a cathedral,

and has been repaired—so far as repairs were necessary—in a chaste and noble style. The great eastern window is of modern painted glass, but is the richest, mellowest, and tenderest modern window that I have ever seen: the art of painting these glowing transparencies in pristine perfection being one that the world has lost. The vast, clear space of the interior church delighted me. There was no screen,—nothing between the vestibule and the altar to break the long vista; even the organ stood aside,—though it by-and-by made us aware of its presence by a melodious roar. Around the walls there were old engraved brasses, and a stone coffin, and an alabaster knight of St. John, and an alabaster lady, each recumbent at full length, as large as life, and in perfect preservation, except for a slight modern touch at the tips of their noses. In the chancel we saw a great deal of oaken work, quaintly and admirably carved, especially about the seats formerly appropriated to the monks, which were so contrived as to tumble down with a tremendous crash, if the occupant happened to fall asleep.

We now essayed to climb into the upper regions. Up we went, winding and still winding round the

circular stairs, till we came to the gallery beneath the stone roof of the tower, whence we could look down and see the raised Font, and my Talma lying on one of the steps, and looking about as big as a pocket-handkerchief. Then up again, up, up, up, through a yet smaller staircase, till we emerged into another stone gallery, above the jackdaws, and far above the roof beneath which we had before made a halt. Then up another flight, which led us into a pinnacle of the temple, but not the highest; so, retracing our steps, we took the right turret this time, and emerged into the loftiest lantern, where we saw level Lincolnshire, far and near, though with a haze on the distant horizon. There were dusty roads, a river, and canals, converging towards Boston, which—a congregation of red-tiled roofs—lay beneath our feet, with pigmy people creeping about its narrow streets. We were three hundred feet aloft, and the pinnacle on which we stood is a landmark forty miles at sea.

Content, and weary of our elevation, we descended the corkscrew stairs and left the church; the last object that we noticed in the interior being a bird, which appeared to be at home

there, and responded with its cheerful notes to the swell of the organ. Pausing on the church-steps, we observed that there were formerly two statues, one on each side of the doorway; the canopies still remaining, and the pedestals being about a yard from the ground. Some of Mr. Cotton's Puritan parishioners are probably responsible for the disappearance of these stone saints. This doorway at the base of the tower is now much dilapidated, but must once have been very rich and of a peculiar fashion. It opens its arch through a great square tablet of stone, reared against the front of the tower. On most of the projections, whether on the tower or about the body of the church, there are gargoyles of genuine Gothic grotesqueness,—fiends, beasts, angels, and combinations of all three; and where portions of the edifice are restored, the modern sculptors have tried to imitate these wild fantasies, but with very poor success. Extravagance and absurdity have still their law, and should pay as rigid obedience to it as the primmest things on earth.

In our further rambles about Boston, we crossed the river by a bridge, and observed that the larger

part of the town seems to lie on that side of its navigable stream. The crooked streets and narrow lanes reminded me much of Hanover Street, Ann Street, and other portions of the North End of our American Boston, as I remember that picturesque region in my boyish days. It is not unreasonable to suppose that the local habits and recollections of the first settlers may have had some influence on the physical character of the streets and houses in the New England metropolis; at any rate, here is a similar intricacy of bewildering lanes, and numbers of old peaked and projecting-storied dwellings, such as I used to see there. It is singular what a home feeling and sense of kindred I derived from this hereditary connection and fancied physiognomical resemblance between the old town and its well-grown daughter, and how reluctant I was, after chill years of banishment, to leave this hospitable place, on that account. Moreover, it recalled some of the features of another American town, my own dear native place, when I saw the seafaring people leaning against posts, and sitting on planks, under the lee of warehouses,—or lolling on long-boats, drawn up high and dry, as sailors and old wharf rats are

accustomed to do, in seaports of little business. In other respects, the English town is more village-like than either of the American ones. The women and budding girls chat together at their doors, and exchange merry greetings with young men; children chase one another in the summer twilight; school-boys sail little boats on the river, or play at marbles across the flat tombstones in the churchyard; and ancient men, in breeches and long waistcoats, wander slowly about the streets, with a certain familiarity of deportment, as if each one were everybody's grandfather. I have frequently observed, in old English towns, that old age comes forth more cheerfully and genially into the sunshine than among ourselves, where the rush, stir, bustle, and irreverent energy of youth are so preponderant, that the poor, forlorn grandsires begin to doubt whether they have a right to breathe in such a world any longer, and so hide their silvery heads in solitude. Speaking of old men, I am reminded of the scholars of the Boston Charity School, who walk about in antique, long-skirted blue coats, and knee-breeches, and with bands at their necks,—perfect and grotesque pictures of the costume of three centuries ago.

On the morning of our departure, I looked from the parlour-window of the Peacock into the market-place, and beheld its irregular square already well covered with booths, and more in process of being put up, by stretching tattered sail-cloth on poles. It was market-day. The dealers were arranging their commodities, consisting chiefly of vegetables, the great bulk of which seemed to be cabbages. Later in the forenoon there was a much greater variety of merchandise: basket-work, both for fancy and use; twig brooms, beehives, oranges, rustic attire; all sorts of things, in short, that are commonly sold at a rural fair. I heard the lowing of cattle, too, and the bleating of sheep, and found that there was a market for cows, oxen, and pigs, in another part of the town. A crowd of townspeople and Lincolnshire yeomen elbowed one another in the square; Mr. Punch was squeaking in one corner, and a vagabond juggler tried to find space for his exhibition in another: so that my final glimpse of Boston was calculated to leave a livelier impression than my former ones. Meanwhile the tower of Saint Botolph's looked benignantly down; and I fancied it was bidding me farewell, as it did Mr. Cotton,

two or three hundred years ago, and telling me to describe its venerable height, and the town beneath it, to the people of the American city, who are partly akin, if not to the living inhabitants of Old Boston, yet to some of the dust that lies in its churchyard.

One thing more. They have a Bunker Hill in the vicinity of their town; and (what could hardly be expected of an English community) seem proud to think that their neighbourhood has given name to our first and most widely celebrated and best remembered battle-field.

END OF VOL. I.

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